

HIS FATHER

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HER BENNY," "IVY," &c.



WITH ORIGINAL
ILLUSTRATIONS





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HIS FATHER;

OK,

A MOTHER'S LEGACY.





THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

[Frontispiece.]

HIS FATHER;

OR,

A MOTHER'S LEGACY.

BY

SILAS K. HOCKING, F.R.H.S..

AUTHOR OF "HER BENNY," "ALEC GREEN," "CROOKLEIGH," "IVY," ETC., ETC.

WITH ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS.



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Dedicated

TO

THE REV. JOHN SWANN WITHERINGTON,

AT WHOSE REQUEST THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN:

AND IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

RECEIVED BY

THE AUTHOR.

1233025

PREFACE.

HAVING been requested by my Publishers to write a preface to this book, I may as well inform the reader how it came to be written.

I had been engaged for some time on “REEDYFORD ; OR, CREED AND CHARACTER,” and had written about twenty chapters, when I received a letter from the gentleman to whom this work is dedicated requesting me to contribute another story to the pages of the Magazine of which he is editor. “HER BENNY” had been so much appreciated by the young people that he was anxious to announce another story from the same pen.

For several reasons which I need not here particularise I was anxious to comply with this request; and yet to do so would place me in a difficulty. I knew that

“REEDYFORD” was not just the kind of story he wanted—not having been written for the young; and, even if suitable, it would, when completed, be much too long.

The only course open to me, therefore, was to put aside the work already mentioned, and write an entirely new story. This I did; though with what success I must leave the reader to judge. Perhaps, however, my critics will bear these facts in mind in noticing this little book.

As regards the story itself, I need not say much. It may, however, be of interest to some of my readers to know that it rests on a foundation of facts, some of which I gathered during a two years’ residence among the hills of South Wales. Of Owen Thorne the picture is rather under- than over drawn. Enoch Walder was a well-known character in the village in which he lived, and the way in which he used to “spite himself,” and especially the manner in which he “found liberty,” are spoken of to this day. The

story of little Mike is strictly true, as is also that of Douglas Wynne.

Of the lessons this book is intended to teach, or the truths it is meant to illustrate and enforce, I shall say nothing here. If the story itself does not make these points clear to the reader, then it has failed in the object for which it was written.

But this much I may say. My aim has been to do good: to point out dangers and incite to goodness: to write a story that could be safely placed in the hands of any boy or girl, or in the library of any Sunday School.

For the very generous reception that has been given to my other books I would express my thanks, and hope that this one may not be a whit behind the others in the welcome it receives.

S. K. II.

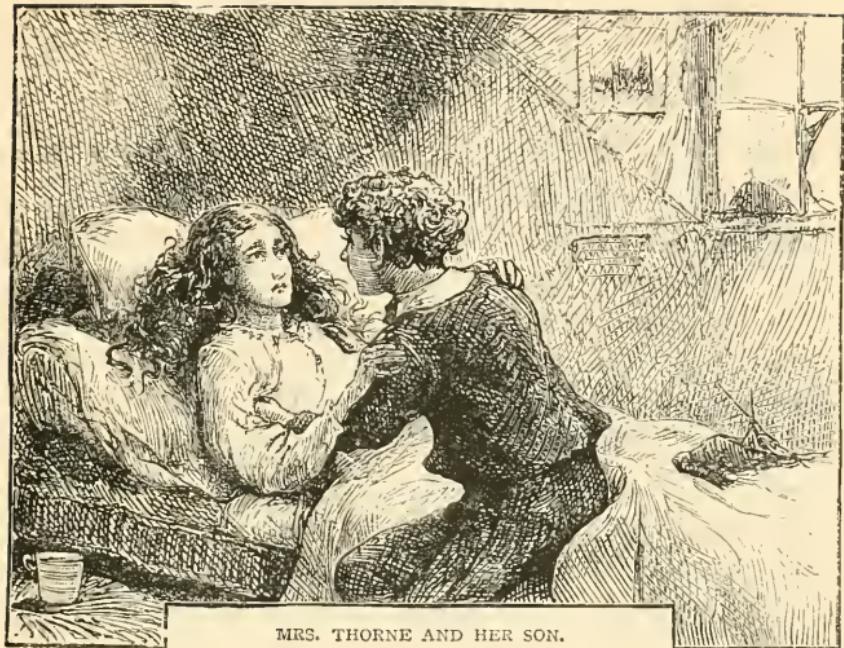
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MRS. THORNE AND HER SON.

HIS FATHER.

CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECTIVE.

"Oh, let me dream of happy days gone by,
Forgetting sorrows that have come between,
As sunlight gilds some distant summit high,
And leaves the valleys dark that intervene."—AIDE.

PRIMROSE SQUARE was not by any means what its name would seem to imply. If primroses ever grew in the neighbourhood it was so long ago that no one could remember it, and the only tradition

that remained of the circumstance was the name attached to the dingy court. People said that it must have been country once : that its very name was sufficient to indicate that, "once upon a time," where now the crumbling houses stood, green meadows stretched away intersected by mossy banks, where violets grew and primroses bloomed in the bright spring days. But at the time of which we write there was not a meadow within a mile of the place, and the Square itself could not boast of even a tuft of grass.

The entrance to Primrose Square was by a narrow passage—so narrow, in fact, that it was with the utmost difficulty that two could walk abreast. You might have passed along the busy street a hundred times without noticing the narrow entrance, and very few indeed of the thousands that daily hurried to and fro knew of the existence of the quiet square behind the tall houses—of the little city within the city—or guessed that in a locality given up to shops and warehouses such a place could have survived.

There were not many children in Primrose Square. The inhabitants were mostly elderly people, who had come there to hide from the rude gaze of the world. The majority of them had seen better days, but the tide of fortune had ebbed without a flow, and left them stranded high and dry upon the beach, and when hope died out of

their hearts, and there was no prospect of the tide of fortune ever coming back, they crept into the Square to be out of sight, to hide their heart-aches and disappointment from the world, and wait till death should give them peace and rest. Despite its poverty, then, Primrose Square was an eminently "respectable" neighbourhood, but it was pitiful to see the shifts that were made day by day to keep up appearances and preserve an air of respectability. The men especially could not forget that they had seen better days, and it was enough to make one cry to see them hour after hour brushing and sponging their faded clothes previous to an excursion into the city.

There were only sixteen houses in the Square, but as every house contained at least three separate households, some fifty families found a home in this quiet retreat. The aristocracy of this little community occupied the first floor, the middle class went a storey higher, and the very poor the top. The cellar of each house was common property to all the families that dwelt under that roof.

The third floor of the house bearing the highest number was occupied by Amy Thorne and her only son. Like most of the others, poor Amy had seen better days, but the tide had gone out and left her a stranded wreck, and now she lay

waiting until death should come and put an end to the weary struggle, and give her rest. It was a sultry August afternoon. The air was stagnant everywhere, but in Primrose Square it was almost suffocating. The window of Amy's room stood wide open, but no cooling breath came through, no gentle breeze to fan the sufferer's brow. It was a poor bed on which she lay, with her head propped high with pillows. She had known a better once, but that was in other and happier days, before she commenced the hard struggle for bread which so soon would end her days. She had tried during the early part of the day to do a little knitting, but her wasted fingers seemed no longer equal to the exertion, and dropping the needles with a sigh she lay back upon the pillow and closed her eyes. But though her hands could no longer work her brain was busy. Her thoughts were far away from the red-tiled city, away among her native hills. She forgot for awhile her weariness and want, and plucked again the flowers that grew in her father's garden, and listened to the music of the stream that rippled down outside the garden hedge. It seemed such a little while ago since she was a happy maiden without a want or care. Then she began to count the years.

“ Fifteen years,” she said, with a sigh. “ How short, and yet how long.”

Then she opened her eyes and looked wearily around the room.

"Ah, me! ah, me!" she sighed, "little did I think I should come to this. I wonder what poor old father would say, if he were to see me here. I wonder if he is still alive."

Then she closed her eyes again, and lay for awhile perfectly still. She did not look much more than thirty years of age, and though wasted by want and consumption was very beautiful still. Her rich brown hair fell in massy waves upon the pillow, showing by contrast the clear outline of the face. On either cheek a red spot glowed, telling of the fire that raged within. Her lips were parched and cracked, and her breath came hot and thick. Perhaps she felt that the sands of her life had near run out, for she opened her eyes at length with a startled look, and said—

"I wish Harry was come. I must tell him to-night, or it may be too late."

She did not close her eyes again, nor did the startled expression pass away from her face, but her breathing became more heavy and laboured, and the perspiration stood in big drops upon her forehead. Very slowly to the pale sufferer the hours of that sultry afternoon wore away, and painfully slow seemed the ticking of the old Dutch clock in the corner. But at length, as the dusk of evening began to gather, she heard a light

foot-fall on the stairs, and the next minute her son Harry came into the room.

"And how are you this evening, mammy?" he said, bending over and kissing her forehead.

"Don't you think you are a little better?"

"I'm afraid not, Harry," she said faintly. "I've not felt so well this afternoon, and I am so thankful that you have come home."

"I've had to go all the way to Clifton," he said hastily, "or I should have been home sooner. I was afraid you would be getting anxious about me."

"I wanted you to come early because I have a great many things I want to say to you, and I am afraid my strength may not hold out." And she looked fondly up at the face that bent over her.

"Oh, please, mammy, don't talk in that way," he said, the tears coming into his eyes. "You'll get better after awhile; I'm sure you will."

"My poor boy," she said, laying her wasted hand on his, "you must not be deceived any longer. I shall never get better, and I may be gone before the morning."

"Oh, no, no," he said, kissing her fondly, "I cannot let you go, mammy. You are all I have in the world, and what could I do without you?" And he knelt down by the bedside, buried his face in the clothes, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Don't give way so, Harry, my boy; I want you to be brave for my sake. God will take care of you when I am gone; and it is about that time I want to talk to you."

"But I can't bear to hear you talk about dying," he sobbed. "You must not die, mammy; let me call Mrs. Porter to come up and get you your gruel, you will feel better then."

"No, Harry, I want to talk to you alone. Give me a drink out of that jug, my boy, and then listen. Thank you, that is better. Now try to be brave for my sake."

"I'll try, mammy," he sobbed.

"I'm sure you will," she said. "And now let me try to tell you what I ought to have told you long since. You can remember your father, Harry? It is more than five years since he went away, and I know that you have believed for a long time that he was dead. It has been my wish that you should think so. But to-night I feel differently about the matter. I have no proof that he is dead. He may be living, Harry, and he may come home again. If he does, I shall be gone. But you, Harry, I want you to be kind to him. If he should come to you, poor and broken down, for my sake, Harry, don't spurn him."

"We grew up together in the same village. He was a clever, impulsive lad. You are very

much like him, my boy, in some things ; God grant that you may never be like him in others. He had a great love for everything artistic. He could play the harp beautifully, had quite a genius for painting portraits, and was besides a splendid singer. As a consequence he was much sought after, and going so much into company became his ruin.

“We had loved each other from being children ; and I could not or I would not believe all the tales that were circulated in the village about him. To me he was always the same. I could see no fault in him. I knew that he was fond of life and company, but I said, ‘All young men are the same,’ and I felt sure he would settle down into a thoughtful, sober man when the proper time came.

“When I was between seventeen and eighteen an old uncle of my father’s died and left him all his property. So father decided to give up the house in which we were living, and go to Cwmdare and take possession of the house in which his uncle had lived. I was very much annoyed at this. I felt certain that he had decided to go to live at Cwmdare on purpose to get me out of the reach of Owen Thorne, though he never hinted at such a thing. But father was a quiet man, and never consulted anyone in relation to his movements.

“ I gave father no hint of what I felt ; and he never knew what a trouble it was to me to leave my early home. Our new home was only a cottage. I had expected that it would be a grand house, and as you may suppose I was greatly disappointed. I professed to father that I was very well pleased with it, and indeed the surroundings were very beautiful, and the cottage itself was very pretty and picturesque.

“ I was very lonely, however, for I had no mother ; she died when I was an infant. If she had lived perhaps things would have been different. Ah well ! ah well !”

And the sufferer sighed, and a far-away look came into her eyes, as if she saw something far away beyond the bounds of the narrow room. And Harry watched her, but did not speak.

“ Another drink, Harry,” she said at length ; “ I must get on with my story. Thank you ; now I feel better again.”

“ I’m sure you are better, mammy,” said the boy impulsively ; “ I’ve not heard you cough for the evening.”

“ I’ve had no cough since morning, but my breathing gets difficult ; but let me see, where was I ? Now I remember. I lived at Cwmdare for more than two years, and on the whole was happy, for I often met your father in the lanes outside the village. He did not mind the long

walk over the hills, and I was content so long as I knew that he loved me.

"But one evening my father met him in the village, and guessed why he was there. I never saw your grandfather in such a way as he was that night. He asked me if I had been in the habit of meeting your father, and I told him I had. For awhile he seemed speechless. Then he declared that 'rather than I should meet that idle, drunken scamp, he would lock me up in a room and never permit me to see anyone.'

"Those were his very words, and they almost made my blood boil. I don't know what I said to him, but I remember he went out of the room at length and locked the door upon me, and I remained there all night. The next day he was calmer, but I was not; if anything, I was more excited than ever. He wanted to reason the matter over with me, but I would not hear him. I wrote to your father and told him how I had been treated, and the next day we met at the old trysting place outside the village, and we resolved that we would go away together and get married.

"So we came to this city and got married by special licence, and here I have lived ever since. That is fifteen years ago. Ah me! how time flies. For the first few years of our married life I was tolerably content. Your father made

a good deal of money by giving lessons on the harp and by singing at concerts, but, alas! the thirst for drink seemed to grow upon him all the while, and in time his pupils fell off one by one, and his engagements at concerts became few and far between, and we began to feel the pinchings of poverty.

" This had the effect of driving him more frequently than ever to the public-house, though how he got money to spend there was often to me a mystery. Scores of times I longed to write to my father and ask for help, but somehow I could never bring myself to do it. I had hoped during the early days of our wedded life that Owen would in time win a name and fortune, and that we would go back together to our old home, and I would show my father how he had been wrong in his estimate of Owen; and I used to think how the old man would be proud of his daughter's husband. Ah me! ah me! the dream has fled for ever. I could not go back in poverty and disgrace to tell how my idol was shattered, how my own loved Owen had become a wreck. I could not even write for help. My pride would not permit me.

" More than five years ago your father went to America: how he got the money to pay his passage I never knew. For a few months he wrote regularly, though he never sent me any

help. Then the letters ceased. It is more than four years since I heard from him. Whether he is living or dead God only knows. But somehow I cannot but think he is living still, and it may be that he will yet find his way to our early home over among the hills of Wales. You may find him there, my boy. If you ever do, be kind to him for your mother's sake, and tell him I loved him to the last.

"I have never ceased to pray for him. He had praying parents, too, and when he was a lad he was a scholar in the Sunday-school. Surely those early lessons shall not be lost; surely our prayers shall not be in vain. But, oh! Harry, my boy, remember that the love of drink has been your father's curse, and I want you to promise me ere I die that it shall never pass your lips. Will you promise me that, Harry?"

And poor Amy Thorne looked appealingly up into the eyes of her son.

"Yes, mammy," he answered; "I promise you I will never drink. No, never."

"God help my boy," she whispered, and clasped her wasted hands together. Then she closed her eyes, and for awhile there was silence in the room. Then she whispered, without opening her eyes—

"There are a few shillings in my purse under the pillow; take them, for you will have need of

all. The furniture will pay the rent, and when I am gone leave this busy, sinful city, and seek your grandfather among the glorious hills of dear old Wales, and tell him that I——”

But she did not finish the sentence. Bending over her hastily, Harry saw a red line issuing from her mouth and marking her cheek down to the pillow. Rushing to the top of the stairs he called to Mrs. Porter, the old woman who occupied the floor below, then back again to the bedside. Opening her glorious eyes once more, Amy Thorne bent on her boy a look of unutterable tenderness, but speech was gone. Quickly he bent down and kissed her; and for a moment a smile flickered on her face like a gleam of sunshine, then vanished for ever.

When Mrs. Porter came into the room the poor broken heart was still, and the weary, aching head was for ever at rest.





MRS. FORSTER AND HARRY THORNE.

CHAPTER II.

FAREWELL, HOME.

" My mother's voice ! how often creeps
Its cadence on my lonely hours !
Like healing sent on wings of sleep,
Or dew to the unconscious flowers.

" I can forget her melting prayer
While leaping pulses madly fly,
But in the still unbroken air
Her gentle tone comes stealing by." — WILLIS.



HARRY THORNE was a noble-looking lad, tall, slender, and as straight as a rule. Perhaps he looked a shade too serious and thoughtful for one his age. But his life hitherto had not allowed much room

for mirth. While other boys of his age could find plenty of time for play, he had to work; and when evening came he was too tired to go out again into the city, and besides he was all the company his mother had, and he felt that he could not enjoy himself playing in the streets while she was sitting lonely and sad at home. So he made very few companions, and rarely indulged in play. His chief recreation was in painting pictures. He had quite a genius for drawing, and when on one of his birthdays his mother bought him a shilling box of water-colours, his delight knew no bounds.

Some of his first attempts were remarkable examples of colour. Blue horses, green cows, and red sheep figured on the walls in every variety of size and shape; but the study of prints and paintings in shop-windows soon taught him better, and in time some of the sketches in crayons, and also in colours, that adorned the walls of his poor home did him infinite credit, and gave promise of a successful future.

His mother never discouraged him in this. She knew it was all the pleasure the boy had, and besides she loved to have him at home in the evening; she knew then that he was safe, and out of the reach of mischief. And she had no greater pleasure in life than to watch him bending earnestly over his work, or see the glow of

pleasure that mounted to his cheek when he had been more than usually successful in some point of form or colour.

He was a boy that any mother might have been proud of. And often would poor Amy brush back with her wasted hand the dark curls from his broad forehead, and look fondly down into the great brown earnest eyes, in which lurked no shadow of falsehood or deceit. And Harry would smile back upon the fond face that bent over him, and whisper, "Dear old mammy."

Happy times were these to both mother and child, despite the gnawing of poverty and the burden of care. But they were over now. Never more would the dear smile of love beam welcome upon the boy; never more would the wasted fingers play hide-and-seek among his curls. The great brown eyes of the mother were sealed in sleep now that knew no earthly waking, the loving heart was still, and henceforth he must fight the battle of life alone.

How he got through the next few days he never knew. In after years they seemed to him like a painful dream. He always carried with him, however, a very vivid remembrance of the funeral. About a dozen men from the Square walked with him behind the parish undertaker's van to the cemetery outside the city, and stood around the grave while the Burial Service was being read

They wanted to show their respect to the memory of the brave, patient woman who had struggled so hard and so long to earn bread for herself and boy.

Harry did not weep at the grave, or betray any emotion. He stood silent and fearless until the benediction was pronounced, then turned and walked slowly back to Primrose Square. But what he felt nobody ever knew, never could know. It seemed to him sometimes as if he must die too—as if he never could bear such a burden of sorrow, and live.

That evening as he sat in Mrs. Porter's room, silently rocking himself to and fro, the old lady ventured to ask him what he intended doing with himself, and whether he had any friends or relatives to whom he could go? Harry started at the question, as if he had been surprised out of a dream.

"Do? Relatives?" he questioned, looking around him with a bewildered air.

"Yes," said the old woman; "have you any relatives that will give you a home now that your mother is gone?"

"Gone!" he said, his eyes filling; "ah, yes, she's gone, ain't she? and will never come back again," and he burst into a flood of tears.

"That's right, my dear," said the old woman kindly, "have a good cry, it'll ease your heart,

and you'll feel all the better for it;" and she brushed back his tangled curls with her wrinkled hand, muttering " Poor boy! poor boy!"

She did not speak again for awhile, she thought it best for his grief to have way, so she began to busy herself in getting supper ready, for she knew that he had scarcely eaten anything since his mother died.

Harry soon recovered himself, and fixing his eyes on the empty grate, he began seriously to consider the old woman's question. He could not help feeling surprised that his mother should have been so reticent for so long a time about her early life, and also about his own father. Was his father living, he wondered, or was he fatherless as well as motherless? Then he tried to recall what she had said to him on the evening she died. She had intended to say more, of that there could be no doubt, and would have done so had not death stilled her heart so suddenly. On one point, however, she had made her wishes clear; he must leave Primrose Square and go to his grandfather, who lived—or did live—at Cwmdare, a village somewhere among the hills of Wales. But how was he to get there? and suppose when he got there he found— But, no! he would not suppose anything at all. His duty was now to carry out his mother's dying wish, go to Cwmdare, and trust to God for the rest.

There was no reason why he should wait a day longer where he was; he could start on the following morning, could leave behind him, perhaps for ever, the noisy toiling city, and seek a home among the distant hills that he had seen sometimes from the heights of Clifton. He had wondered many times what life would be like away from the hurry and noise of the crowd, and if the people that lived among those blue hills, that stood out on sunny days so grand and clear against the sky, were happier than those who dwelt in the crowded city.

For himself he did not think he could ever be happy anywhere again. In the city or in the country it would be all the same, now that his brave, patient mother was gone. Still it would be a comfort to him to carry out her dying wish; he only wished that she had left him fuller instructions, for he felt that henceforth there could be no greater joy in life for him than trying to do what she with her dying breath had wished.

"Mrs. Porter," he said at length, looking up, "do you know anything about Wales?"

"Yes, and indeed I do," she answered hastily; "I was born in Glamorganshire."

"Then perhaps you will be able to help me a bit," he said.

"Indeed, and I shall be very glad to help you,

if I am able," she answered. "What do you want to know?"

"Could you tell me anything about a place called Cwmdare? I want to get there if I can find out how." And he looked up inquiringly into her face as he spoke.

"Cwmdare! Cwmdare!" soliloquized the old woman, with an unmistakable Welsh accent. "There be so many Cwms in Wales that indeed I cannot just answer for the moment."

"I am sorry for that," he answered, looking troubled.

"Let me see now," said the old woman, after a pause. "I think I do know something about the place after all, but it's only a village, if it's the place I mean."

"It'll be the same, I daresay," said Harry. "Mammy said that it was a village."

"Up among the mountains?" she questioned.

"Yes, that is it," he said excitedly. "What is it like?"

"Well, now, indeed I don't know what it is like, for I have never been there, only now I come to remember, I've heard of a place of that name."

"Is it easy to find?" was Harry's next question.

"Indeed, and I cannot answer you that ques-

tion," said the old woman, with a smile; "but it's very likely it won't be over easy to get at."

"Why so?"

"Well, you see, 'Cwm' means a dingle or narrow valley between the hills, and if you should happen to take a wrong turn and get into the wrong Cwm, you might get miles out of your way."

"Oh, I see," he answered, looking thoughtful.

"Did you say that you were going there?" said the old woman at length.

"Ye-s," he answered slowly, as if thinking of something else; "my grandfather lives there, and mammy told me before she died that she wished me to go to him;" and he brushed his hand hastily across his eyes as he spoke.

"Did she tell you how you were to get there?" questioned the old woman.

"No, Mrs. Porter. She intended to say more, I am certain, but you know how——" A great lump in his throat would not permit him to finish the sentence, and Mrs. Porter answered hastily—

"Indeed and, my poor boy, I do know; but don't fret, I think I can put you in the way of finding the place."

"Thank you, Mrs. Porter; if you can help me I shall be very much obliged;" and he looked gratefully up into the face of the old woman, who

had shown him and his mother many a little act of kindness, and who since his mother's death had found him a home.

"Well, come now, dearie, we'll have a bit of supper. If you start to-morrow morning you'll need all your strength, and you'll need a good night's rest as well."

"I don't think I can eat anything, Mrs. Porter," he said sadly.

"Oh, yes, you can, if you try," she answered cheerfully; "and the while I'll tell you a bit about Wales."

"It's very beautiful, ain't it?" he questioned.

"Indeed and it is, dearie, but 'Glamorganshire is the garden, and Swansea is the flower of Wales.' You've heard that, I daresay."

"No," he said, "I never heard it before."

"But it is true for all that." And for the next half-hour the old woman, with honest pride sparkling in her eye, entertained her guest with a description of the wonders and beauties of the Principality. She also gave him what directions she was able for his journey, and ended by a proposal to go with him up to the rooms lately occupied by himself and mother, and help him to gather together the few things that belonged to him, and which he would need on his journey.

The sight of the empty bed and the cheerless room made him feel very sad, and it was in vain

that he tried to keep back the tears that filled his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. It was about the only home he had ever known, and despite the poverty and daily struggle for bread, it was endeared to him by a thousand precious memories. What hours he had sat on that strip of faded carpet before the fireplace, busy with his drawing or intent upon some book that he had borrowed, while his mother sat near him with her sewing, every now and then looking down and gladdening him with her smile.

How everything reminded him of her, how he missed her everywhere, how often he paused as he fancied he heard her voice calling him, and started as Mrs. Porter came out of the little bedroom, with the word "mammy" on his lips.

The old woman did her best to keep up his spirits, and chatted away all the while about the wonderful hills and dales away across the channel, but he gave little heed to what she said, and at length he broke down utterly, and laid his face on the one strip of carpet the room contained, and sobbed as though his heart would break.

"We'd better come away now, dearie," she said at length, tying the ends of a large checked handkerchief that contained all his earthly possessions.

"I can't help it, Mrs. Porter," he said, getting

up from the floor. "It fairly breaks my heart to think I shall never see her again."

"Dear heart," she said kindly, and placed her hand upon his head, "the Lord will keep thee."

He paused in the doorway, and turned to take a last look at the home he was leaving for ever.

"Farewell, home, and farewell, mammy," he sobbed, then hurried down the stairs. He tried for the rest of the evening to be brave, but his heart was very sore, and when he retired to bed at length, it was not to sleep, and he could not help wondering if there was another poor boy in the world so sad and lonely as he. Hour after hour he lay tossing on the hard mattress, thinking of the past and wondering about the future. The past seemed all brightness to him now; he forgot the poverty and heartache and toil as he looked back over the years that had gone for ever. His mammy was with him then, how could it be other than bright? But the future! that lay before him dark and uncertain. On the morrow he would go out alone to face the world! go out, not knowing whither he went. Go out to danger, perhaps; perhaps to death, God only knew. And so he lay watching and waiting for the dawn: for the morrow that was to bring him he knew not what.



HARRY ON THE STEAM-PACKET.

CHAPTER III.

BY RIVER AND RAIL.

"The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below."—SCOTT.

EARLY next morning Harry got up unrested and unrefreshed, for thoughts had troubled him all the night and would not let him sleep. For a long time he knelt by his bedside and prayed, as his

mother had taught him, for help and protection ; but the old form of prayer that he had learned in years gone by did not seem to cover all his wants or express all his needs to-day. He was alone in the world now, and life was opening up before him new and strange. The burden of existence seemed to press upon him with tenfold might now that his mother was not with him to share it. So he prayed as he never had prayed before. His deep and pressing needs found ready utterance. He knew nothing about the *philosophy* of prayer ; his mother had taught him to pray, had told him that God would hear and help him if he did, and that was enough for him ; and there by his bedside he kneeled and talked with God, and rose from his knees at length feeling assured that God had heard him, and that He would give him help.

When he got into the next room he found that breakfast was quite ready. Mrs. Porter had got for him a rasher of bacon, and some dry toast, luxuries that he highly appreciated as a general rule, but to-day he was too excited to eat much breakfast ; he did the best he could, however, for the old woman's sake, for he did not wish her to think that he was insensible to her kindness. When the simple repast was ended they knelt down together side by side, and the old woman, placing her trembling and wrinkled hand

upon his head, prayed that the blessing of the great Father might rest upon the poor orphan boy.

"Thou didst guide Jacob," she said, "when the poor bairn had to leave his home, and didst tell him in a vision of the night that Thou wouldst be with him in all his ways, and that Thou wouldst not leave or forsake him. Wilt Thou then in Thy mercy guide this poor bairn? He is going away into a strange country and among strange people: may he find friends there, and a home; and may he never leave Thee or forget that he has a Father in heaven. Keep him in all his ways, till in heaven we shall all meet and never part again. Amen."

An hour later they went forth together, accompanied by several of their neighbours, but very few words were spoken until they reached the little steam-packet that was to convey him across the channel to his new home. Then good wishes and good advice began to pour in upon him from every side. He thanked them all very sincerely for their kindness and attention, and shook hands with each of them twice over; then the bell rang, and a few moments later the paddle-wheels began to turn slowly, churning the dark water into foam, and the vessel moved away from its moorings out into the less crowded spaces of the river. Waving his cap

as a last adieu, he walked to the other side of the boat, feeling that the old life was ended now, and that the new life had commenced in sober earnest.

Boy-like, he soon forgot his troubles in the novelty of the situation. It was so pleasant to be gliding past the busy barges and floating rafts of wood. The motion of the little vessel was delicious, and the rush of the water behind the paddle-wheels sounded like music to him. Now they were passing under the Suspension Bridge that looked like a giant's toy swinging in mid-air, now on between steep cliffs of frowning rock, now patches of distant country burst upon their vision through gaps in the cliff, now wooded dells sloped down to the water's edge, now a sudden bend in the river brings them in sight of an ocean-going steamer under the guidance of a labouring tug, and now a pleasure boat glides swiftly past. Everything was so new and delightful to Harry that he felt his spirits rising every moment. No longer the stagnant air of the toiling city, but cool sweet breezes off the hills. The dirty streets were far behind him now, and beneath his feet was the clean-washed deck, and before him across the sparkling waters of the channel the blue hills of his future home.

After a while Harry began to take notice of the passengers and to wonder where they were

all going, and whether any of them had a future as dark and uncertain as his.

"I wonder who that boy is?" he said to himself after awhile. "My! hasn't he a nice face though, and isn't he dressed just splendid. I wonder if that red-faced old gent with the white whiskers is his father?"

And Harry sat down and thrust his hands into his pockets, and began to watch them more closely.

"I guess he is," he said to himself at length. "And that pretty lady is the old gent's wife. My! she is pretty though, almost as pretty as mammy," and he brushed his hand hastily across his eyes. Then he shifted his seat a little nearer to them.

"My! but she's a pretty sight younger than the old gent," he went on, "and isn't he a grumpy-looking old card. I guess he's not all honey, especially when he's riled; he seems very fond of the little girl, though; my! but she beats her mother out of sight. Isn't her hair just glorious! shouldn't I like to touch it though, have it in my hand for just a minute; and ain't her eyes just——"

And he thrust his hands deeper into his pockets, and turned his head the other way, for just then the gentleman and the little girl left their seats, and made their way towards his end of the boat.

The next minute they were standing close by his side, and the glorious golden hair of the little girl almost touched his cheek, as it swayed to and fro in the breeze. They did not notice him, they were looking away across the shining waters towards the hills of Wales that every minute loomed nearer and more distinct.

"I could touch it now and she would never know," he thought, but he kept his hands in his pockets. Poor he might be and an orphan, but he could not be rude. Houseless and homeless he was, and for aught he knew friendless as well; alone there on the boat and meanly clad, yet Harry Thorne, in spite of all, was a little gentleman, both in manners and feeling.

"Well, Ethel, are you glad that you are going home again?" said the gentleman at length.

"Very glad, papa," she answered, looking timidly up into his face.

"And you've had enough of Clifton, eh?"

"I've been very happy, papa, but there's no place like home. Shall we get home to-day?"

"No, Ethel; I've got a little business to transact as soon as we land, and if I hadn't, the only good train in the day will have gone before we get in."

"But there are other trains, are there not?" she asked, timidly.

"Yes, but don't you see it would be dark

before we got to the station, or nearly so, and I don't care to have a four or five miles' drive along those lonely mountain roads in the dark."

"I did not think of that, papa," she answered; "of course what you decide to do will be for the best."

Then they turned and walked slowly away again, and Harry sat staring after them, wondering who they were, and where they were going.

"I don't care for the old gent," he mused, "though he does seem so fond of the little girl; but then he can't help that, she's so beautiful. I wonder if the boy likes her—he's her brother, I expect;" and Harry looked thoughtful and grave, as if some painful memories had been awakened.

"My!" he said to himself at length, "I wish I was her brother, wouldn't I make a fuss over her just; I wonder now why God never gave me a sister," and he looked grave and thoughtful again, then after awhile—

"It's best as it is, I expect; if I had a sister she'd be poor and homeless like me," and he gulped down a great lump that had risen in his throat, and got up and looked over the side of the vessel at the sparkling waves that seemed rushing swiftly past them. After awhile they began to steam up a narrow winding river, with low slimy banks and a stretch of marsh land on either side. Still on, past dirty barges and noisy coal tips.

Now the masts get thicker, and the line of docks appears in sight ; onward still, past coalers, stuck fast, apparently, in the slimy banks, past chimneys, and timber-yards, and graving docks. And onward still, till a many-arched bridge spans the river and further progress becomes impossible.

Harry was sorry to lose sight of the fair vision that had so interested him during his journey, but in the hurry and bustle of landing this was inevitable. Swinging his bundle over his shoulder he trotted away through the busy streets, and by dint of many inquiries succeeded at length in reaching the station. The booking office he found closed and the place almost deserted, but after some searching he stumbled over a porter, who, in answer to his inquiry, informed him that the train for Llanvarcwmtrydd, the nearest station to Cwmdare, had been gone about ten minutes, and that there would not be another train for two hours.

This was a very discouraging piece of intelligence to Harry, especially as it was now two hours past noon, and he had discovered that he would have several miles to walk after he had reached the end of his railway journey, and his great fear was that he might get benighted among the mountains, and lose his way altogether. There was no help for it, however, and he was

disposed to make the best of his situation; so sitting down in a corner of the waiting-room, he proceeded to devour the remains of Mrs. Porter's rasher and toast, which the old woman had insisted on his taking with him. He had protested in the morning that he should not need it, but his sea trip had brought him to an appetite; he was thankful enough for it now, and thought that he had never tasted a more toothsome morsel in his life.

"My!" he said, as he lay back in the corner and closed his eyes, "the old lady was right, but for her forethought and kindness I should be half famished before Cwmdare is reached."

Five minutes later he was fast asleep, and for the next hour he was utterly unconscious of all that was passing around him; when he did awake it was with a start to find that the room was half full of people, and that a train had come in from somewhere, and was disgorging its contents on the platform. The fragments of conversation that fell upon his ear were to him most bewildering, for while some were speaking English others were jabbering away in Welsh, and in the confusion of sounds he could make out nothing that was said.

The sound of a strange language, however, awoke a new fear in his heart. "Suppose," he said to himself, "when I get to the station with

that outlandish and jawbreaking name, I find that they can't speak English, what am I to do then?" and he thrust his hands deep down into his pockets, as if by that means he might find a road out of his difficulty.

"Of course," he said to himself at length, "they'll speak English at all the stations, for there are always people travelling who don't understand Welsh, but what about Cwmdare?—that's an out-of-the-way mountain village, as far as I can gather. What a stupid I was not to ask Mrs. Porter about it, and what a strange thing she did not say anything about the matter."

Just then the porter whom he had already spoken to came into the room, and Harry went up to him at once.

"If you please, sir," he said, "could you tell me if they speak English at Cwmdare?"

"Oh ay, my lad," said the porter, with a knowing look, "they did last time I was in that direction, at any rate."

"Very much obliged," said Harry.

"Oh, ye're welcome, lad," said the porter, in a friendly tone. "Ye see Cwmdare is a kind of border village; the main outlet o' the village 'tis true is in the direction o' Swansea, and all the coal goes down that way; still its near the border, an' English and Welsh gets pretty much mixed in those neighbourhoods."

“I’m glad of that,” said Harry, “for I can’t speak a word of Welsh.”

“And you’d ‘ave a tough job to larn it,” laughed the porter. “You’d ‘ave to swallow a yard of flannel before you could pernounce some o’ the words.”

“Is it as bad as all that?” said Harry, feeling amused at the porter’s loquacity.

“Bad? Well, you just try it on; I never made but one attempt at larnin’ it, and I got on amazin’ well too while I had any skin left on my throat, but after that the scrapin’ got ’orrid painful and I had to give it up as a bad job.”

“And quite time too, I should think,” laughed Harry.

“Right you are, my lad,” said the porter; “but there, the pigeon-hole is open at last. I’ll get yer ticket for yer if ye like, fare ‘ll be two an’ eightpence.”

“Thank you,” said Harry, “I shall be very much obliged to you if you will.”

“Yon’s the train,” said the porter, coming back with the ticket, and taking the money. “It’s the same as comed in just now; we hitch the ingine at t’other end, and sends ‘er out again the way she comed.”

Taking up his bundle, Harry got into a corner of a long open carriage of very primitive construction, and waited with as much patience

as he could command for the train to start. Nobody, however, seemed impatient but himself, the officials went about their work in a very leisurely manner, and he began to wonder at what time of the day or night he would get to Cwmdare.

The whistle, however, sounded at length, and after several jerks and bumpings of the carriages against each other the train got fairly on her way. For several miles the journey lay through a flat open country, then the hills began to appear in sight, and the scenery became more varied and picturesque.

Harry had an artist's eye for beauty, and was soon lost to everything but the delightful and ever changing scenery through which he was passing. As the train pushed its way farther and farther into the hill country the mountains loomed higher and more precipitous, and the scenery became more and more wild and romantic. Still onward, through deep ravines with craggy cliffs and mountain torrents here and there flashing and glancing in the golden light of the westering sun.

The deep ravines, however, between the hills began to look dark and solemn after awhile, and Harry felt a feeling of awe creeping over him, and began to wish that he was safe at his journey's end. The prospect of having to walk several

miles among those solemn mountains was anything but inviting, and his cheerful spirits began to fail him as the sun sank lower and lower behind the hills.

At length the train began to slacken again, and as it drew slowly up to the platform Harry heard the welcome word, "Llanvarewmtrydd." Seizing his bundle he was out of the carriage before the train had fairly stopped. For a moment he looked around him in bewilderment; a place so wild and weird he had never even dreamed of. Not a house was visible save the wooden structure that did duty for booking-office and waiting-room; on every side dark solemn hills frowned down upon the little station; he almost fancied that he had got to the end of the world, and that farther he could not go.

"Ticket, please," said a porter, coming up to him and arousing him out of his reverie.

"Oli, ay, beg pardon," said Harry, producing the ticket; "could you tell me how far it is to Cwmdare?"

"Oli, a matter of five mile or so; are you going there to-night?"

"Yes," said Harry, "is it difficult to find?"

"No, it's easy 'nough if you know the way," said the man, "but the road is a bit lonely arter dark."

"Which way do I go from here?" said Harry.

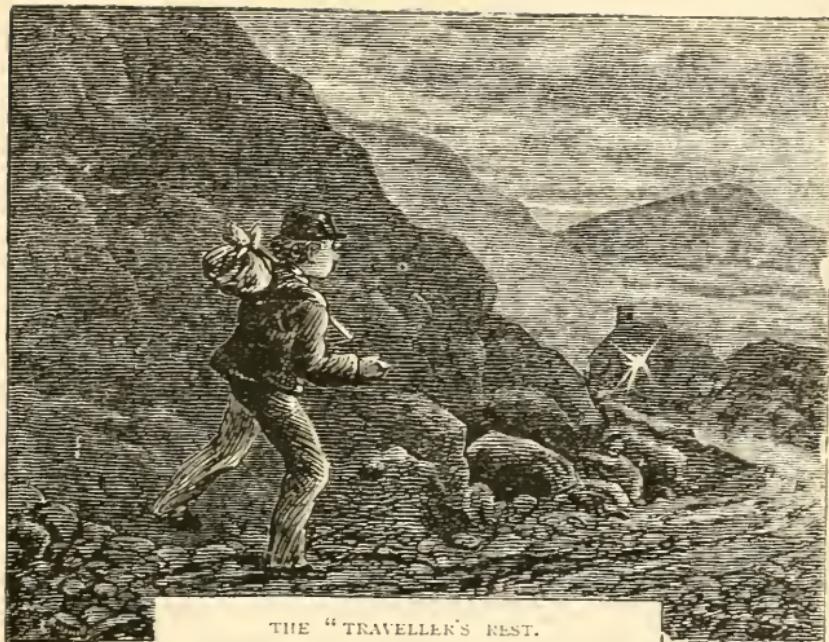
“ You see yon dingle ? ” pointing with his finger.

“ Yes.”

“ Well, keep up there for a couple o’ miles, then turn to the left ; about a mile up that dingle you’ll see a cwm to the right, that’ll bring ’e right to Cwmdare.”

“ Thank you,” said Harry, and shouldering his bundle, he started on his lonely tramp.





THE "TRAVELLER'S REST."

CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGE ADVENTURE,

"Summer eve is gone and passed,
Summer dew is falling fast;
I have wandered all the day,
Do not bid me farther stray!
Gentle hearts of gentle kin,
Take the little wanderer in!"—*Adapted from Scott.*

LIVE minutes' sharp walking brought Harry to the entrance of the valley that the porter had pointed out to him. It did not look quite as sombre and dark as it had done from the station, and he

began to hope the journey might not prove as dismal and lonely as he had feared. If the day had not been quite so far advanced, he would not have minded the walk in the least. Nay, he felt it would be delightful to ramble among those wooded hills in the open day, but after night-fall he had to confess it was quite another thing. The sun, however, had not long set, and he felt sure that the twilight would last half an hour longer; so he hurried on at a rapid rate, determined that he would cover as much of the ground in the time as possible. The farther he proceeded, however, the steeper became the sides of the hills and the narrower grew the valley, while the daylight faded every moment, and the darkness came on apace. This had a very depressing effect upon our hero, but he did his best to keep up his spirits, and pushed bravely on through the gathering gloom, trying to gather courage from the thought that every step he took brought him one step nearer his destination.

But do what he would, his courage sank with the fading light. Everything was so different to what he had been used to. It was so strange and solemn to be there alone among those mighty hills, without a human habitation anywhere visible, without a human voice to bid him a friendly good-night. He had been used to the endless roar of traffic night and day, but here no

sound broke the oppressive stillness save the moaning of the wind in the trees, and the occasional cooing of a dove. In the street outside Primrose Square there were always people passing to and fro ; the tramp of feet was incessant, morning, noon, and night : but here among the hills all the people might be dead, for since he left the station no human being had crossed his path. He felt almost inclined to cry as he saw the darkness deepening in the valley before him, and no friendly light was anywhere visible. He began to wonder if he had passed the bounds of human habitation, and if those frowning hills and dark ravines were not given up to everlasting solitude and silence. He even began to wonder what it would be like to have to lie down there alone and die, and to sleep uncoffined by the hill-side till the morning of the resurrection. Then he tried to rally himself, called himself a silly coward for indulging in such thoughts, and once more quickened his steps that were beginning to lag.

“ Ah, this will be it ! ” he said at length, as he found himself opposite a broad gap in the hills at his left. “ The porter said I must turn to the left when I had got about two miles ; this is the turn, no doubt.”

And shifting his bundle to the other shoulder he pressed forward with spirits somewhat revived.

It was nearly dark by this time, and the road became more and more rough and uneven, while the wide gap between the hills soon narrowed to a tortuous defile with sides steep and rugged. Here the silence was broken by the rattling of a mountain torrent over its stony bed, and occasionally by the wild screech of the night owl. The wind also moaned and wailed in the deep, dark glen as if in pain, and the trees shook their gaunt arms above his head and whispered solemnly to each other.

Harry grew frightened after awhile, and wondered if the place was haunted by evil spirits. Big drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead, and rolled down his face, and yet his teeth chattered as if he had an ague, while his legs felt as if they would not much longer support his weight. Still on he stumbled, almost blindly now, for the ravine had got so dark that he could not see ten yards before him, while the road seemed to have lost itself in the bed of the shallow mountain stream.

At length he paused and looked wildly around him. He was standing now up to the ankles in water, but the cold stream was restful to his hot, tired feet, and the chill wind that swept down the glen was grateful to his hot, throbbing temples.

“I’m lost!” he said, after a pause, and burst

into tears. "Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do?" he wailed. "Will no one help me? Must I die all alone here in this horrible place?" then his fears gaining the mastery over him, he shrieked at the top of his voice, "Help! help! help!" and the hills caught up the cry and sent it echoing hither and thither, until the valley seemed full of lost children crying in the agony of their despair for "Help! help!"

He was so frightened at the voices he had awakened that he dared not cry out again, and after a few moments he became more calm.

"I've taken the wrong turn, that's certain," he said; "I must go back again till I find the road;" and suiting the action to the word, he turned round, and began to grope his way back the way he came.

By the time he reached the main road from which he had turned aside he was utterly exhausted, and throwing himself on the dewy grass he tried to think, and as he lay there, memories of other and happier days crowded in upon his brain, and laying his hot cheek on the damp grass he sobbed as though his heart would break. What a haven of refuge and repose seemed Primrose Square to him now, and what a palace that little room in which he and his mother lived. He wondered how he could have ever thought it mean and poor. The little strip of faded carpet

before the fireplace seemed bright and fresh now, and the poor little bed in which he slept as soft as down. His sad, homesick heart surrounded everything that once was his with a halo of beauty, and made the recollection doubly painful, that they were his no more.

After awhile he sat up and hastily brushed away his tears. He was getting a little more used to the situation by this time, and the silence and darkness were not so oppressive as at first.

"I'll not give up," he said at length, springing to his feet; "I'll find the place yet if it is to be found." Then he thrust his hands into his pockets, and stood for several seconds stock still.

"Worse and worse and worse," he soliloquised, "I don't even know who I'm seeking. Did mammy tell me his name?—let me think. No, she told me to come to her father. But who's he? And whom am I to inquire for?"

"I'd better inquire for old Mr. Thorne, I expect," he said, shouldering his bundle once more, and starting again on his journey. "Her name was Amy Thorne, so I'll ask for Mr. Thorne, Amy Thorne's father. Suppose though he should be——. No, I'm not going to suppose. And I'm not going to be frightened at anything again, I'm going to play the man, so here's off," and he quickened his steps accordingly, but his

heart sadly belied his words, and at nearly every step he took he was ready to burst into tears and to give up in despair.

A few minutes' brisk walking brought him to another turn on the left, where he paused for a few moments as if uncertain what to do.

"This will be the right turn," he said to himself at length; "this is a proper road, and not a mere track like the other. Anyhow, I'll risk it," and on he tramped again. But when he found himself getting into another narrow glen, his fears returned almost as great as ever. The road, however, kept good, and that encouraged him, but it had got so dark by this time that he had to move forward with the greatest caution.

At length a joyful cry escaped his lips. He had just turned a sharp corner, and far up the valley he saw a glimmering light.

"I'm right at last," he said excitedly. "Ah, it is gone out. No, there it is again; hurrah, I'm safe now," and he started off at a sharp trot, and kept it up until he was quite out of breath. In ten minutes, or less, he found himself close to the light. It proceeded from the window of a solitary house that stood by the roadside, a low rambling house, roughly built of unhewn stone. Harry had hoped when he saw the light at first that he had reached some village, but in this he was disappointed, no other house was visible, and

the one solitary light in the window alone illuminated the darkness.

The house had not by any means an inviting appearance, and anything more weird and wild than the neighbourhood in which it was situated he could not imagine. Over the door a battered signboard swayed in the breeze, and creaked on its rusty hinges, bearing the words, "Traveller's Rest;" but it was too dark for Harry to see anything but the board; but concluding it was a tavern, he approached the door and gave two or three raps with his knuckles.

"I can inquire my way, if I don't stay for the night," he said to himself, as he waited for the door to open.

At length he heard a shuffling step inside, and a moment later the door slowly opened, and a tall, hard-featured old woman stood before him holding a candle in her hand. After surveying him for several seconds from head to foot, she uttered in a hard, grating voice the one word, "Well?" and waited for an answer.

"If you please," said Harry, "could you direct me the way to Cwmdare, or could you let me stay here for the night? I have lost my way, ma'am, and I'm hungry and tired."

"If I let you have supper and bed, could you pay for it?" she inquired gruffly.

"What would you charge?" said Harry.

"A shilling for supper, and a shilling for bed, that's two shillings, ain't it ?"

"Yes," said Harry, "I'll pay you if you'll let me stay ; I've got a half-crown left."

"Is that all you've got ?" she asked snappishly.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered ; "I've spent all the rest."

"Well, come in," she said, after a moment's pause, taking hold of his arm at the same time and pulling him into the house.

Harry was not much reassured by this treatment, but he determined to make the best of it. It was a cheerless room in which he found himself, open to the roof, the rafters of which were smoked black as ebony. The few articles of furniture the room contained were of the rudest construction, and an air of neglect and decay pervaded the whole place. A peat fire was smouldering in the open chimney, before which Harry seated himself, and proceeded to take oft his wet stockings and put on a clean pair, which he took from his bundle. By the time this was done the old woman had got a large bowl of bread and milk ready for him. Harry was not long in emptying the bowl, and better milk he declared to the old woman he had never tasted in his life.

"Humph," she grunted ; then, after a pause, she said, "Where have you come from ?"

"From Bristol, ma'am."

"Where's your father?"

"I fear he's dead," he answered.

"And your mother?"

"She's dead also," and Harry hastily brushed away the tears that started in his eyes.

"And who're you going after at Cwmdare?"

"My grandfather."

"Who's he?"

"Mr. Thorne."

"Humph."

"Do you know him?" questioned Harry.

"No! Now you can go to bed, if you like."

And she led the way to a room at the back of the house. Harry caught up his boots and bundle, and followed her at once.

"There," she said, placing the candle on a rough table, and pointing to a bed in the furthest corner of the room, "you'll be able to sleep there," and without another word she left the room and slammed the door behind her.

The first thing Harry did when the old woman had gone was to examine the door, upon which he could discover, however, neither lock nor bolt, so he quietly moved up the table against the door and proceeded to examine the window. This also was without fastening of any kind.

"The old woman does not seem to have any fear of thieves, at any rate," he said, "and

certainly she does not seem to have anything to tempt them. How queer, though, for an old woman to live all alone in such a lonely place. I wonder how she gets her living?" and he sat down on the side of the bed to think. Just then the inch of candle that the old woman had allowed him shot up its expiring flame and went out, leaving him in total darkness.

"I've got into a queer shop at last, anyhow," he said to himself. "I shall not undress though, and I don't think I shall sleep. I wonder how this adventure will end," and he stretched himself on the bed and listened for any movement in the adjoining room. He had not lain many minutes when he heard the front door of the house open, followed by a heavy tread, and the next moment a gruff voice said—

"Well, Nancy, we've got old Enoch's grave ready for him. I guess he'll sleep more soundly to-night than he's done for the last fifty year, and he won't be in any hurry to wake in the morning either."

"You'd better be careful," answered the old woman; "it's a dangerous business."

"Bah!" answered the man. "It serves the old fool right; he tempts one to take advantage of him by his absurd craze of sneaking everywhere he goes by night, and carrying his money round with him."

"I don't believe in that tale about his money," answered the old woman; "he may be a bit crazed, but he's not such a fool as that."

"Don't care," snarled the man. "Once out of the way, I'll soon get my finger in what he leaves behind."

"How so?" asked the woman.

"Never you mind," was the answer; "but the old idiot won't be along for an hour yet, so I'll take forty winks," and he made for the door of Harry's bedroom.

"Don't go in there," said the old woman.

"Why?" he asked, in a hoarse whisper.

"There's a boy asleep there," she answered.

"A what? Why did you not tell me so before?" he hissed. "He may have heard all I've said."

"Nonsense," she answered; "he was very tired and hungry when he came. He had lost his way among the hills, so I got him supper, and he's been asleep long since."

"How do you know that?" he said, and he swore at her a terrible oath. Then for a few minutes there was silence, and Harry listened at the keyhole with bated breath, and with his hand upon his heart to still its loud beating.

"Look here," said the man at length, "that boy, whoever he is, will have to sleep with old Enoch to-night."

"Nonsense," said the old woman, "the boy can do no harm."

"Bah! you're a bigger idiot than I took you to be. If that boy has heard anything, a single hint might set the hounds on the scent, and then our game would be U. P."

"But he's heard nothing," persisted the old woman.

"You cannot be sure of that," said the man, "and we must be on the safe side. There's no help for it, it must be done."

"You'd better think twice," said the woman.

"I have thought twice," he hissed. "I'm sorry to do it; but can't be helped, the brat will never know what's come to him. Keep the door bolted on this side. He can't get through the window, the bars outside 'll prevent that; he won't try if he's asleep."

"Where are you going?" she questioned.

"Only across the way to call Luke; he's handy at little jobs of this sort."

"You mean it, then?" she whispered.

"Most certainly," he answered, "and mark you, if you attempt any trick you go the same road."

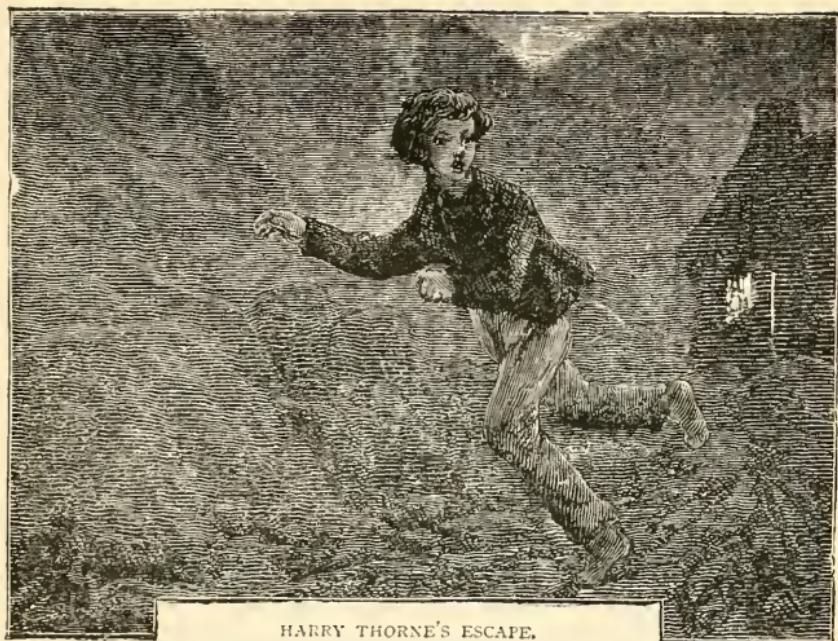
"You may trust me," she said, "only if evil comes of it, remember I warned you."

As soon as the conversation ceased Harry sprang to the window, and threw it open. Alas,

what the man said was too true, strong iron bars secured it on the outside !

“ This, then, is the end of it ! ” he said, with a look of despair in his eyes. And sending up a silent prayer to God for help, he sat down on the side of the bed and calmly waited his fate.





HARRY THORNE'S ESCAPE.

CHAPTER V.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

“Hope on, hope ever! Though to-day be dark,
The sweet sunburst may shine on thee to-morrow;
Though thou art lonely, there's an Eye will mark
Thy loneliness, and guerdon all thy sorrow.”

GERALD MASSEY.

“**N**EVER DESPAIR!” was a frequent saying of Amy Thorne's, as year after year she battled bravely with pain and poverty. “We should never lose heart, Harry,” she would say, “while there's a ray of hope left, or while we have a brain

to think or hands to work ; and even should the worst come to the worst, we should still remember that we have a Father in heaven, and our extremity may be His opportunity, and He can help us when we are powerless to help ourselves."

Harry thought of these words as he sat by the bedside waiting and listening. That the dark-bearded man whom he had seen through the key-hole meant mischief he had no doubt. But young as he was, and hopeful, he could scarcely bring himself to believe that the man meant to take his life. And yet what other construction could he put upon the words? The man had distinctly stated that "Enoch's grave was ready," and had also stated that "the lad would have to sleep with Enoch." And the more he thought about it the clearer it became to him that an old man called Enoch was expected to pass that way that very night, that the dark-bearded man intended to rob him and murder him, and then bury his body, and that he was to share the same fate, lest he had heard anything and should go away and tell.

The thought was horrible, and springing to his feet, he wrung his hands in a very agony of terror. "And is there no escape?" he said. "And must I die in this den without a chance of defending myself?" Then his mother's words came back

to him, and he almost fancied he heard her voice speaking to him out of the darkness : "Never despair, Harry, and if the worst comes to the worst, we have a Father in heaven."

"Alas," he said to himself, "the worst has come to the worst. The door is bolted, and the window secured by iron bars, and the men will be upon me in a few minutes more at the very outside. Oh, God in heaven, have mercy !" he cried to himself.

And staring wildly around the room he noticed a black patch in the wall just opposite him. "I wonder what that is?" he said to himself; and going towards it he discovered it to be a large open chimney. Looking up he saw two or three stars twinkling above the narrow opening.

"I can do it," he said, and instantly commenced the undertaking. Fortunately the house was low, and, as we before stated, roughly built. Harry was young and agile, and keeping his eyes and mouth shut, he found himself in a very few seconds at the top of the chimney. To get on to the roof and slide down the back was the work of a second, and to drop to the ground was scarcely the work of another. Fortunately, the ground was high at the back, the house being built against a hill. No sooner had his stocking feet touched the ground than he started off with the fleetness of the wind along the rough hillside.

underneath the sheltering trees, heedless of the thorns that rent his clothes and the stones that cut his feet.

On, on he went for several minutes, and then stopped suddenly, and lay flat upon the ground. From the road that wound round the hillside below him came the sound of heavy footfalls and the murmur of voices.

"We'd better make haste," said a voice, that he instantly recognised as belonging to the man who had spoken in the house; "the old idiot will be along this way in a few minutes now."

"The sooner the better," was the answer; "I shall be glad when the job is over."

"But we'd better get the youngster out of the way first."

"As you like; it's as well to be hanged for a sheep as a lamb."

Then the words became indistinct as the men moved farther away toward the house. Getting up cautiously, Harry made his way down to the road. The way was clear now, so he bounded off like a startled hare. On, on, on, till the ground seemed to fly from under him. He did not know that his feet were cut and bleeding; he did not even know that he had left his shoes behind him. All that he knew was that he was on a race for life. He dared not slacken his speed, though he was breathless and almost exhausted, for he had

little doubt that when the men found that he was missing they would start in pursuit. He had no fear of missing his way now, he did not know whether he was going towards Cwmdare or going from it; he did not care. One thing he knew, that every step he took increased the distance between him and those who sought his life.

Now the road began to descend, and running became easier. On, on, still on, when once more he came to a sudden halt. He was face to face with an old man riding a mule slowly up the hill-side.

Instantly seizing the bridle rein, he hissed in an excited whisper—

“Are you Enoch?”

“What’s that to thee?” said the old man, raising his heavy whip to strike. “Let go the rein this instant.”

“Don’t strike,” said Harry, “I’m only a lad; but if you are Enoch, for God’s sake turn back, for they are going to murder you!”

Instantly the old man let his raised arm drop to his side.

“Who’s going to murder me?” he said in a sharp tone; “and how comes it, lad, that thee knows anything about it?”

“I dare not stop here to tell you,” said Harry, “for I have escaped from them, and most likely at this moment they are ‘n pursuit of me.”

"Then jump up behind me, and I reckon they'll soon give up the pursuit, as you call it."

With the aid of the old man Harry was soon astride the mule, and turning the animal's head round, they were soon galloping down the hill at a rate that astonished Harry, but with a motion so easy that he had no difficulty whatever in keeping his seat.

This rate of speed was kept up for about a quarter of an hour, along a way that seemed little frequented. Then they turned aside from the main road down a narrow glen, and turning a second corner behind some high projecting rocks they halted before what seemed the mouth of a cave. Here the old man alighted with wonderful agility, and drawing the bridle rein over the mule's head, he walked into the cave, the mule following without any hesitation.

"Keep thy head down," said the old man to Harry, "and don't be frightened, I won't harm thee."

"Oh, I'm not frightened, sir," said Harry, lying forward on the mule's back. And yet he could not help thinking that it was a very strange proceeding; and as they moved forward step by step into the darkness, he began to wonder if, after all, the old man was not crazy, as the man back at the inn had said.

At length, much to Harry's relief, they halted,

and striking a match the old man lighted a small lamp which he took out of one of his enormous pockets. Placing it on a ledge of rock, he assisted Harry to alight; but no sooner had his feet touched the ground than he sank down with a cry of pain.

"What's the meaning of this?" said the old man, "you were spry eno' just now;" and he took down the lamp and let the light fall on Harry's feet. "Ah, I see," he said gruffly. "Well, this is in thy favour, lad; I'll be more inclined to listen to thy story now, for here is some proof of thy sincerity."

"Where?" said Harry, not exactly understanding the old man.

"Why, here in thy cut and bleeding feet. Dost thee know that thou hast no shoes?"

"I had forgotten all about it," said Harry, "I was glad to escape anyhow."

"Did you come up through the chimney, for thou art as black as old Nick himself?"

"Yes," said Harry; "both door and window were made fast, and up the chimney was the only way of getting out."

"Still I don't understand thee," was the rejoinder. "I can't see why anybody should wish to harm thee."

"Don't you see," said Harry, "I had overheard the man talking. I had got lost, and

seeing a light made my way to the house. Only the old woman was in, and she gave me a bowl of bread-and-milk, and then sent me to bed."

" Well ? " said the old man.

" Well, I had only just lain down in my clothes when the man came in ; and the first words he said were, ' We've got old Enoch's grave ready. He'll sleep sound to-night, and won't be in any hurry to wake in the morning.' "

" Did he say that ? " questioned the old man eagerly.

" Yes, sir ; but the old woman cautioned him, and he replied, ' Oh, he tempts one to do it by his stupid craze of going everywhere by night, and carrying all his money around with him.' "

" Well, and what then ? "

" Why, he was coming into the room in which I was, and the old woman told him not to do so, as a lad was asleep there. Well, he got into a great way at that, said very likely I had heard what he had said, and, lest I had, I must be put out of the way. The old woman pleaded for me, but he said, ' it couldn't be helped, and that I'd have to sleep with old Enoch.' "

" Well, and what next ? Out wi' it."

" Oh, a good deal was said, and then the man went out to call somebody named Luke ; and while he was gone I climbed up through the

chimney and slid down at the back of the house, and made off as fast as I could."

"Humph!" growled the old man, when Harry had finished his story. "So that was their little game, was it? Well, they've missed it this time."

"You are Enoch, then?" questioned Harry.

"Eh, boy, I'm Enoch Walder; everybody knows me for miles among these hills. But I tell thee, lad, I'm mightily annoyed."

"Are you?" said Harry.

"I be," was the reply. "I hate to be obligated to anybody. For thirty years I've been beholdin' to nobody. I hate men an' women too, an' boys I detest. I don't believe in anybody. Everybody tells lies, everybody cheats, everybody back-bites his neighbour, everybody's a hypocrite, because everybody wants everybody else to think he's an angel."

"I don't think everyone is as bad as you think," said Harry, timidly, for he was rather frightened at the old man's sudden outburst.

"Look you here," said Enoch, proceeding to bind up Harry's feet with the strips of a pocket-handkerchief that he had torn up for that purpose, "I've lived longer'n you. And I say there's not a bit of real kindness, or generosity, or gratitude, in the world. People say they are obliged, when in their hearts they're vexed because you

ain't done more for 'em. And if they do a kind act it is with the expectation of receiving fifty per cent. on the outlay, or they wouldn't do it at all. And I'm the most selfish old wretch among the whole lot of 'em."

"Why are you doctoring my feet so nicely then?" said Harry. "Do you expect to get something for it?"

"Well, thee'rt a cute lad too," grinned Enoch. "But no, I'm doing it just to spite myself, just out of pure spite. I hate boys, and my selfish old heart keeps sayin' to me all the while, 'Let the boy alone, Enoch, thou'l never get paid for thy trouble;' and so I'm doctoring thee just to spite myself. I've to do some'at of the sort nearly every day to keep myself under; if I didn't spite myself pretty often, I should get so bad that I shouldn't be able to live wi' myself."

"I don't think you are so bad as you profess to be," said Harry.

"Ain't I, though? I'm a good deal worse; but there, how's thy feet now?"

"Very much easier, thank you; I'm sure I'm much obliged to you."

"I don't want any thanks; I hate thanks; folks don't mean it, so don't put on."

"But I'm not putting on," said Harry, a little indignantly.

"There now, say now't, least said soonest

mended. Now let's know your name, where you come from, and where you're going ; there, you see my bad inquisitive old nature is leaking out again."

" My name, sir, is Harry Thorne. I came from Bristol. I'm going to Cwmidare."

" Thorne ? eh, a black thorn to all appearance. Look a bit whiter perhaps when thee'rt washed. Where's thy father ? "

" I fear he's dead, sir."

" Humph ! And thy mother, is she living ? "

" No, sir ; poor mammy died only last Saturday," and the tears came into his eyes again, which he hastily brushed away.

" An orphan, eh ? What was thy mother's name ? "

" Amy Thorne, sir."

" And thy mother is dead, eh ? Hast thou any brothers or sisters ? "

" No, sir, I'm all alone in the world now," and once more the tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

For several minutes neither of them spoke again, then the old man turned to Harry with the question—

" And what art thou going to do at Cwmidare ? "

" I hardly know," said Harry. " But mammy told me the evening she died to go to my grand-

father when she was gone, and I hope, if I find him, he will be able to put me into the way of getting my living."

" You do, eh? Well, I hope you'll succeed."

" Do you know my grandfather Thorne ? " said Harry.

" There be no Thornes that I'm aware of in Cwmdare," said Enoch, " but there's plenty of them across the hills at a place called Cefnnewidd. But I'll help thee to make inquiries."

" Thank you," said Harry, " I shall be so much obliged."

" Now, now, that'll do. I want none of thy thanks ; thou hast done me a service, and though I detest boys, I'll spite my sinful old nature and help thee if I can."

Harry was about to thank him again, but, remembering the old man's peculiarity, he refrained from doing so. For a long time neither of them spoke again. Enoch sat with his elbows on his knees and his face buried in his hands, while Harry stretched himself on a heap of dried leaves that had been drifted or carried into the cave. Harry wondered what the old man was thinking of, as he sat so silent and still. At length, with sudden energy, Enoch blurted out the question—

" Did thy mother send any message to her father, lad ? "

"No," said Harry, "the message she intended sending died with her."

"How dost thou know she intended sending any?" questioned Enoch, shortly.

"Because," said Harry, "she was talking to me and telling me what to do, when she died almost sudden, and did not finish what she meant to say."

"Dost thou remember her last words, boy?"

"Oh yes, I shall never forget them!" said Harry, with a little shake in his voice. "She said, 'When I am gone, Harry, leave this sinful city and go to your grandfather among the glorious hills of dear old Wales, and when you find him tell him that I——' and then she stopped, and the blood came into her mouth, and she spoke no more—she only smiled upon me and died."

Enoch did not reply to this, and Harry's thoughts were back again in Primrose Square. He saw the strip of faded carpet, and his mother's glorious eyes as she bent tenderly over him; he forgot his swollen feet for awhile, and once more he lived again within hearing of the city's roar and the tramp of hurrying feet.

"This," said the old man at length, speaking slowly, "is my place of refuge when I get disgusted with the hollow world outside. Many a day and many a night I have spent here; but,

boy, even here I cannot get away from myself, and I'm beginning to learn, after long years of blindness, that we are not made miserable or happy by what is outside of us, but by what is inside of us; lay that lesson to thy heart, lad. Thou hast heard of heaven and hell, boy, let me tell thee they are realities. We make our own heaven or our own hell; we carry it round with us, inside; dost understand? There's no'wt but hell for me, here or hereafter, because I'm a mean, bad, selfish, miserable old sinner. Now, lad, sleep if thou canst. In an hour the dawn will creep up behind the hills, then we must be off. Thou shalt go to Cwmdare with me, and I will help thee to find thy friends, if thou hast any friends, and if thou hast none, thou art no worse off than others. Friends, did I say? Bah, I will say no more. Sleep, boy, for thou art weary, and I will watch for the morning."





ON THE ROAD TO CWMDARE.

CHAPTER VI.

CWMDARE AT LAST.

"Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;
The noisy geese that gabbl'd o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind."

GOLDSMITH.

HARRY was never quite certain whether he slept that night or no. He always had a very distinct recollection, however, of starting to his feet at a touch from Enoch, and then falling back with a moan

of pain. His feet had become so swollen and painful that the least touch almost made him shriek.

"I see how it is, boy," said Enoch, not without a touch of sympathy in his voice; "so lie still, and I will fetch Neddy, and get thee on his back. Dost thou see the daylight streaming in?"

"Yes, I see the light," said Harry, "and the sight of it is very welcome, too."

"No doubt, no doubt. But I intended to have been at Cwmdare by this."

"Have you been sleeping?" said Harry.

"Ay, boy, I could not watch one hour, indolent old sinner that I am. However, nothing has come to harm either thou or me, so let us be off."

Neddy, the mule, seemed thoroughly to understand his master's ways, and was quick to do his bidding. The beast stood as still as a block of wood while he was being saddled and until Harry was safely mounted, and then at a word from Enoch followed him steadily out of the cave.

"Now, boy, take fast hold of me," said Enoch, when he had got into the saddle, "for we shall have a roughish road this morning." Harry noticed that they did not go back again into the road from which they had turned aside on the previous evening, but pursued a narrow track, scarcely distinguishable sometimes, across the

hills. It was slow travelling, for Ned did not seem at all disposed to get his legs pricked by the rank gorse; so he picked his way with great sagacity and circumspection, occasionally pausing to contemplate two paths that opened before him, as if undecided which to take.

"If there is one way better than another," said the old man, "Ned is certain to find it; so I don't hurry him."

Harry was not at all sorry that they moved on so slowly, for his feet were very painful, and seemed to get worse the farther they proceeded. Still on they went: now across a heathery moor, that had the appearance of being a bog in the winter; now through a forest of oaks and mountain ash; now cautiously down a steep hill-side into a narrow dell; now toiling slowly up the opposite side, and on again through brakes of gorse, with patches of heather and wimberry here and there to give variety to the scene. At length they emerged suddenly upon the Queen's highway, evidently very much to Ned's delight; for giving a loud snort, and setting back his ears, he started off at a quick canter, which by and by broke into a gallop as the road began gradually to descend into the village of Cwmdare.

Enoch, as a rule, was not very particular about appearances, and often he protested to himself that he did not care how he looked or what

people said about him. Yet, somehow, this morning he was not at all anxious to be seen. He had intended to have got into the village before any of the people were stirring, and would have done so had he not overslept himself. As it was, he still hoped that he might reach his own cottage without attracting any special attention. He knew that his companion presented a most grotesque appearance, with his clothes torn into shreds, his feet tied up in strips of a red pocket-handkerchief, and his face presenting a curious study in black and white.

A group of boys down the road, loitering on their way to school, was not by any means a comforting sight, and Enoch raised his hat and wiped his bald pate, previous to running the gauntlet; when suddenly a small boy started out of the hedge, with the remark—

“I say, Enoch, you’ve lost some’at.”

“What have I lost?” said the old man, turning round sharply.

“Your hair,” said the boy quietly; at the same time cleverly dodging the lash of the old man’s whip.

Enoch said nothing, but giving the bridle rein a violent jerk, Ned quickened his pace.

“I say,” said one of the group to the other boys, when he caught sight of Harry, “Enoch have got Uncle Tom’s Cabin behind him!”

"Oh, Methusaler!" said a second; "but ain't he dressed like a perfect gent!"

"He's got his Sunday's clothes on!" said a third.

"But, Enoch," interposed a fourth, "hadn't you better put the boy inside?—he'll be safer there."

Harry could have cried with vexation and shame, but he gulped down the lump that was rising in his throat, and determined that he would make the best of the situation. He noticed, however, when they got into the village, that the older people treated Enoch very respectfully, and evidently regarded him as a person of some importance.

Enoch's cottage stood a considerable distance back from the main thoroughfare, and was almost hidden by trees on the side next the village. A little lawn of well-kept grass, with green trellis-work around the door, gave to the cottage quite a pleasant appearance. Behind there was a long kitchen-garden, slanting down to a brook, that cold and clear went babbling on for ever and for ever. Crossing the brook by a narrow plank, you found yourself in one of several green meadows that occupied the entire width of the narrow valley, and seemed bounded on every side by thickly-wooded hills. Harry took in the whole situation at a glance, and was delighted with the

pleasant retreat in which he found himself, for the cottage was as comfortable within as it was pleasant without. Nay, after the poor little rooms in Primrose Square, it seemed to Harry like a fairy palace, and he wondered how the old man kept it so nice and clean, living all alone as he appeared to do.

The secret, however, was soon explained to his entire satisfaction. On the other side of the valley, reached by the plank that spanned the brook, and a narrow foot-path across the meadows, lived an old couple that were known in the village as Adam and Eve. Adam Rees was quite a character in his way, and his wife was a suitable companion for him in every respect. This worthy couple looked after Enoch's house, his garden, and his farm, and privately they were of the opinion that they looked after Enoch himself. They were careful, however, not to express such an opinion in public, for they knew their master's peculiarities—none better—and they had no wish to leave the comfortable home in which they had been located well on to twenty years.

Harry had scarcely got settled in a huge sofa to which Enoch had carried him when in toddled Adam and Eve. Enoch did not wait for either to speak, but turning at once to the old woman, he said—

“Breakfast, Eve, for me and the boy. Water

to wash him when that's done, and then see to his feet; he's met with an accident, and cut them badly."

At this point Adam, who had been pulling his forelock vigorously, chimed in—

"What 'e think, maister? the pig's brock——"

"If the pig's broke his neck, serves him right!" interrupted Enoch; "go and feed Ned, and groom him well, and then go on and tell Tominy Pugh that I want him a minute. Dost hear?"

"Ay; but the pig's not——"

"So much the better," snarled Enoch; "now be off with ye."

"Boys ha' been a tormentin' 'im ag'in, as sartin as 'oopin'-cough," was Adam's mental rejoinder as he toddled off to obey orders. "But what in the name o' Nicodemus can he mean by bringin' that boy 'ome wi' 'im? Well, he is the most curus old critter that I've ever known sin' I was raised, that's sartin. Some new craze o' his, I expect. Done it just to spite hisself, I shouldn't at all wonder; for I know he loves boys 'bout as much as cats love mustard." And having relieved his mind somewhat by this long soliloquy, Adam proceeded to feed and groom the mule, after which he delivered his message to Tommy Pugh, the tailor, and then returned to the cottage to await further orders. In the meanwhile, Adam's better half

had prepared a substantial breakfast of ham and new-laid eggs, to which Enoch and his guest did ample justice. A cold bath followed, which was very grateful to Harry, and then Eve proceeded to "doctor" his feet.

"Ay, maister," said the old woman, "they're in a shocking state; I'm afear'd they'll both gather;" a prediction, alas! which came too true, and poor Harry was an invalid for a much longer time than he had bargained for, but he bore the pain very patiently, and Enoch never had any occasion—much as he detested boys—to grumble at the conduct of his guest.

Tommy Pugh arrived in due time, and was ordered to measure Harry for two new suits of clothes, an announcement which made our hero pinch himself to be certain that he was not dreaming. Tommy Pugh received the order with a low whistle, indicative of the most profound astonishment. Eve clasped her hands and raised her eyes, as if she were about to expire then and there, while Adam grunted to himself in an undertone, "Jerusalem! but he's gone of it this time, to a sartainty."

"Now, Adam," said Enoch, when the tailor had gone, "what about the pig?"

"Turned tatey digger on his own account," was the reply.

"What d'ye mean by that?" said Enoch.

"Brock threw the gardin gate," said Adam, "and set to work a ploughin' the minit he got in, as if he'd bin brought up tew it; never seed owt to equal it sin' I wur 'atched."

"Well, hast thou mended the gate?"

"Ay, an' ringed the pig into the bargain."

"That's right; now thou canst do what thou likes for the rest of the day, as long as thy old woman sees that the lad is properly foddered."

"She'll 'tend to that, no fear," grinned Adam.

"Well?" said Enoch, seeing the old man still loitered.

"Relation like, yon boy?" And Adam twisted himself into all kinds of contortions as he put the question, and got nearer the door, as if fearful of what the consequences might be.

"What's that to thee?" retorted Enoch; "but wait, folks will be pumping thee, let it be enough that the boy will call me Uncle Enoch."

"Uncle, eh?" mused Adam, as he crossed the meadows to his own cottage; "no more his uncle than I be, an' it's sartin' that I can never be nobody's uncle, seein' as I never had no children o' my own." And Adam smiled complacently at the soundness of his own logic, and then went indoors to smoke his pipe over it.

Later in the day, when the shadows began to deepen beneath the trees, and the boys were playing hide-and-seek in the lanes, and the cows

had come home through the dewy meadows, and were waiting at the yard gate to be milked, Enoch stole away through the quiet gloaming, as if anxious to escape observation, and on getting outside the bounds of the village, he walked rapidly along the high road as if intent upon an errand of some importance. About a mile out of the village, where two roads met, he was joined by two other men, and soon after a lad drove up in a trap. Enoch at once took his seat by the driver's side, while the two men got up behind, and then, without a word being spoken, they drove away at a rapid rate. Three or four miles of good road were soon covered, and then came a sudden halt, and Enoch and his companions got out, and gave the driver instructions to return for them at that spot in two hours.

"Now," said Enoch to his companions, after the driver had been dismissed, "we must be cautious, and not let ourselves be seen if we can help it, and we may spot our game, perhaps snare it, and without any great difficulty."

"I've had my suspicions before that this was their hiding place," said one of the men; "but now I'm certain about it."

"You're quite certain that there's no gammon in what the boy stated?" questioned the other man.

"Quite sure," said Enoch, "whatever may be

the result of our expedition to-night, I shall never doubt but that the boy told me the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"Well, they've been wanted long enough," said the first speaker. "It's quite time their little game was put an end to."

"Quite," assented Enoch. "But yon's the 'Traveller's Rest ;' a light burns in the window as usual, let us be wary."

"All right," whispered the other two, and with slow and stealthy footsteps they moved forward, keeping in the deep shadow of the overhanging trees, and pausing every now and then to listen for any sound that might lend a clue to their search.

Everything was silent, however, save the moaning of the wind in the trees, and the tinkling of the brook down the glen. When they got near enough the house to see if anyone passed in or out of the door, they sat still for a quarter of an hour, and listened and watched, but they watched and listened in vain. No one either passed in or out.

"This won't do," whispered Enoch to his companions ; "we had better try some other move."

"Don't be too fast," said the man who had spoken least. "We policemen know what we are about, and if you will leave it to us we'll manage it."

"Very good," whispered Enoch; "you can work the matter your own way."

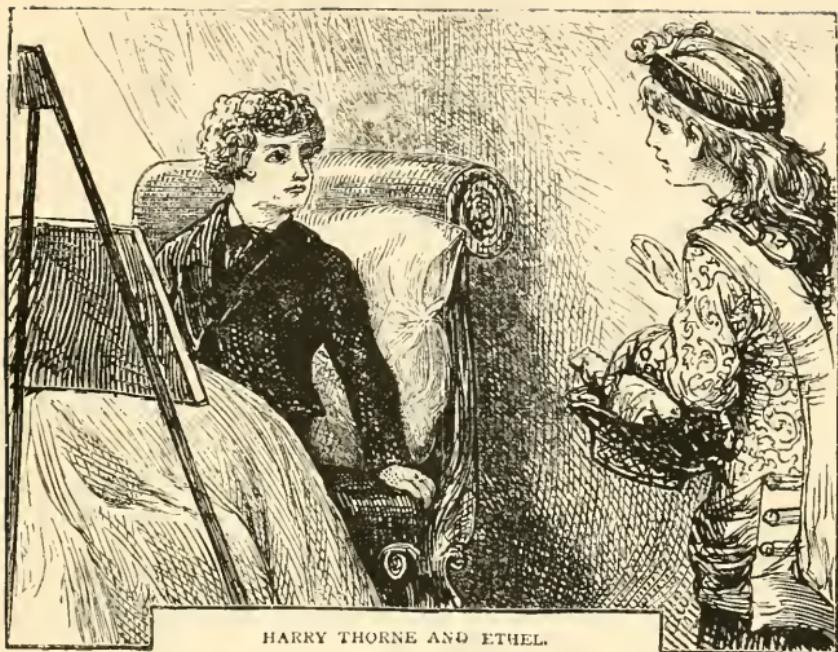
Just then the light in the window of the "Traveller's Rest" disappeared suddenly.

"There," said the policeman in an exultant tone, "there's something on the move now, you may depend."

Then followed several minutes more of profound silence. Then a slow and heavy footfall was heard coming up the hillside behind them. Instantly the three men darted to the other side of the road, and held their breath while they waited. Slowly a dark form that seemed to be heavily burdened emerged from the shadow of the trees, and walked slowly across the road toward the "Traveller's Rest."

"Now's our time," said the policeman, starting up; "there's only one, and our game is easy."





HARRY THORNE AND ETHEL.

CHAPTER VII.

A VISITOR.

" But then her face,
So lovely, yet so arch, so full of mirth,
The overflowing of an innocent heart;
It haunts me still, though many a year has fled,
Like some wild melody." —ROGERS.



MATEUR detectives are not often successful thief-catchers, and Enoch Walder and his companions were no exception to the rule. A Bow Street officer would doubtless have smiled at the manner in

which they set about entrapping a couple of burglars who had been making themselves notorious among the mountain villages for some months past, and would have safely predicted the result. The game that Enoch and the two constables were after was not so easily caught.

"Well," said the old woman, as the two officers confronted her, setting down at the same time two huge pitchers of water which she had fetched from the clear stream that sparkled down the glen, "what are ye after?"

"Oh, you, is it?" they answered, rather taken aback with the old woman's question.

"Me, is it? In course it is me, who'd you think it were?"

"That's our business," said the officer who had elected himself leader of the expedition.

"Then why did you ax me?" retorted the old woman.

"Never you mind that," was the reply; "we are here on special business. We want the two men that have been staying at your house, and were here last night."

"Fetch 'em, then!" she said, shortly.

"But where are they?" said the policeman.

"How do I know?" she sneered; "they had finished their 'oliday, and they left early this mornin' to go to their homes."

" You admit that two men were here last night, then ? "

" In course I do. I've had lots o' people here all the summer ; towerists they call themselves, some o' them call theirselves geologists and antiquitars, and that sort o' thing. I like the towerists best though ; the tothers are always a digging pits, and scrapin' around like hens in a farm-yard. Chaps as were here 'esterday digged a great pit down yonder in the plantation ; said as there was an old cairn there or Roman camp, or summat o' the sort ; don't think they found owt, though."

" I expect not," said the younger officer ; " perhaps they intended to put something in it."

" Very likely," said the old woman, in an unconcerned tone.

" Did anyone else stay here last night ? " was the next question.

" Ay," she said, " a young vagabond of a boy, who crawled out o' the chimbley this mornin', and took off to escape payin' his bill ; I'd like to get hold o' him for five minutes."

" Look here, Nancy," said Enoch, " this won't do ; thou knowest very well that the intention of those men who were here last night was to rob me and take my life, and then bury this sinful old carcase in the pit yonder in the plantation. Thou knowest the boy overheard this, and made

off to save his own life, leavin' his shoes and clothes behind. Now thou had'st better tell all thou knows, or it may be worse with thee."

"Look thee here," she said ; "I've been here five years, and have kept a respectable house ; and if you attempt to rob me o' my character or my house o' its reputation, then you shall pay for it, an' dearly too."

Much more was said on both sides, but Nancy was not to be caught napping. At her invitation, however, the officers searched her house, but found nothing to confirm any suspicion ; and when they left they had to confess to themselves that they had been defeated.

Harry was fast asleep in bed when Enoch got home, so the old man did not disturb him, but very soon betook himself to his own bed ; before retiring, however, he opened an oak cabinet in his room and took therefrom a morocco case. Touching a spring the lid flew open, revealing a face of wonderful beauty. Long and tenderly the old man gazed upon the picture, muttering to himself as he brushed his hand across his eyes, "The same, the same ; the same broad forehead, the same brown eyes, even the smile is the same. O God, forgive me !"

Harry was unable to get downstairs of himself next morning, so after Eve had doctored his feet, she and Enoch carried him down, and laid him

on the big sofa that he had found so comfortable the day before. Harry was very pale and silent. He had been awake since daybreak trying to put his thoughts into shape, but he had not succeeded very well in the endeavour. He could hardly believe that it was only two mornings ago that he had left Primrose Square. It seemed almost a month. What a lot had been crowded into his life in two short days! What strange experiences had been his since he waved his cap a last good-bye to Mrs. Porter. And how was it all to end? That question perplexed him most of all. On the other side of the table sat his strange benefactor, silent and thoughtful. What could the old man mean by treating him in the way he did? He had declared again and again that he detested boys. True, that was not much to be wondered at if the experience of the previous morning was a specimen of the treatment he generally received. Still his conduct was inexplicable.

“Here am I,” said Harry to himself, “a perfect stranger, and he is as kind to me as if I were his own. Is it all out of gratitude, I wonder, for warning him of his danger, or is there something more that I know nothing about?” But with all his puzzling he could make nothing out of it.

When Eve at length left the house, Enoch turned to Harry, and broke out abruptly—

"Look here, boy, I want to talk to thee."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, looking up with a questioning expression of countenance.

"Yes. Thou'rt big enough now to think for thyself. What age art thou?"

"Twelve, next birthday, sir."

"Humph! Look here, I got my living when I was thy age."

"And I can get mine," said Harry, colouring.

"Whew!" said Enoch, lifting his eyebrows. Then, after a pause, "Yes, yes, thou'rt right, lad. I admire thy independence and pluck, after all."

"Thank you, sir."

"Well, look here. Day after to-morrow I go to Cefnnewidd; dos't understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"I've a bit of a farm not far from there, and a cottage or two; and I've to pick up a bit of rent and look after some repairs; so while in the neighbourhood I'll make a few inquiries about thy granfer Thorne; there be several folks of that name thereabouts. But what I'm a thinking about, boy, is this. S'pose thy granfer's dead, what art thou goin' to do?"

"I don't know," said Harry.

"Well, then, let me tell thee it's time thou did know, an' while I'm away thou hadst better think it over."

“Yes, sir, I’ll do as you wish.”

“An’ one thing more, boy.”

Harry looked up, but did not reply.

“I’ve got a proposal to make thee,” went on Enoch, “but not now. But if, as I strongly suspect, thy granfer’s gone to kingdom come, I’ll make it when I return.”

“Yes, sir,” said Harry, not knowing what other reply to make.

“Thou’ll be comfortable here for a day or two, eh?”

“Oh yes, thank you, and I’m very much obliged to you for letting me stay.”

“There now, that’ll do, I want no thanks. You like books, don’t you?”

“Yes,” said Harry, “very much.”

“Well, thou’lt find plenty in yon cupboard—history, romance, adventure, anything you like.”

“Oh, I’m so glad!” said Harry.

“Humph! Is there ow’t thou likes better than books?”

“Only one thing,” said Harry, blushing.

“And what’s that?”

“Pictures, sir.”

“Ah—h!” Then, after a long pause, “Did thy mother encourage thee in that?”

“Yes, sir, she bought me a box of water-colours, and she used to sit by my side and help me with her smile.”

“Humph!” grunted Enoch, and then the conversation ended. And for the rest of the day Harry saw very little more of his strange friend. But when he was helped down to breakfast next morning what was his surprise and delight to find such a box of colours and camel-hair pencils as he had sometimes seen in shop windows, but which he had never dared hope to possess. Harry did not speak, but the flush of pleasure that mantled his cheek did not escape Enoch’s keen eye.

“Is it the right kind of thing, boy?” said the old man at length.

“Oh, it’s splendid!” said Harry, raising his great brown eyes that were full of gratitude to the old man. “I can’t tell you how much——”

“There, there, now, boy, that’ll do. Thou’lt be able to amuse thyself a bit to-morrow while I’m away.”

“Oh yes, you are very good.”

“Now, now, boy, don’t say that again, thou knowest now’t about me; I’m a miserable selfish old sinner. I had to fight the old man within me all day yesterday, but I was determined to spite myself an’ do it, an’ I’ve done it—done it out of spite to myself, for I can’t bear boys. Bah!—but never mind; amuse thyself to-morrow; perhaps I’ll be away the day after as well.”

And Enoch rose from the table and went out,

and Harry saw no more of him till dinner-time. The morning soon slipped away, however, for Harry was soon at his work with paints and pencils, and in a very short time was so absorbed in the fancy sketch he was making that he was altogether unconscious of the flight of time, and indeed of nearly everything else.

Early next morning Enoch pushed his head into Harry's room with the question—

“Art a 'wake, boy?”

“Yes,” said Harry; “I've been awake some time.”

“Glad to hear it. Of all boys, I hate lazy sleepy-heads, lie-o'-beds most; but good mornin', I'm off. Adam and Eve will look after thee; amuse thyself all thou canst, and don't expect me till thou sees me.”

And before Harry had time to reply Enoch was gone. By the time Eve made her appearance Harry had succeeded in dressing himself, and was sitting on the side of the bed patiently awaiting the arrival of the old couple to help him downstairs.

“Where's Adam?” said Harry to the old woman, when breakfast was over, and she was busy taking away the breakfast things.

“In the gardin, sir,” said Eve, with an unmistakable Welsh accent.

“Will you tell him to come here?”

“Indeed I will,” said Eve, and bustled out of the house at once.

In a few moments Adam appeared, grinning and shuffling, and twisting his body into all kinds of contortions.

“Could you help me, Adam,” said Harry, with a smile, “to fix up something to rest this drawing-board on?”

“Oh, a drawing-board, is it,” said Adam, with a grin; “it looks mighty like the ow’d woman’s trancher.”

“Well, it is the trencher, I believe,” said Harry, “but Eve has lent it to me.”

“Thow’t I wur right, arter all,” grinned Adam; “but you want it a fixin’ up where you can get to it, ‘andy like, to dra’r your picters?”

“Yes, that’s just what I want, Adam.”

“Oh, I’ll do that for ‘e as aisy as winkin’; I’m amazin’ handy at little jobs o’ fixin’, ain’t I, Eve?”

“Indeed, and you are, Adam,” said the old woman, looking proudly at her husband.

And in a very few minutes Adam had justified his boast, and Harry was reclining comfortably on the sofa with the extemporised easel before him within easy reach. And as the morning passed swiftly away he forgot his trouble and heartache. Not even did the future trouble him, and Enoch’s advice to think about what

he should do in case his grandfather was dead was altogether neglected; he was happy in the blissful present, and was not disposed to go to meet the troubles that, alas! too surely were coming.

Eve brought his dinner and laid it on the table without a word, and disappeared as suddenly and silently as she had come, and when Harry had eaten as much as he cared to, he lay back among the cushions and tried to think.

It was a still, drowsy afternoon. September had come in bright and golden, there was yet no sign that summer was passing, save that here and there the leaves began to change their colour, and the flowers were fewer in the garden. The breeze was so soft and gentle that it scarcely moved the leaves that drooped and glowed in the sunshine, and its gentle whisperings could not be heard in the room where Harry lay. Now and then sounds of laughter from distant fields on the hillside floated softly in through the open window, making Harry long for the moment to join the children in their play. But the longing was only momentary. It was so restful to lie in the cool room among the soft cushions, and listen to the birds that warbled out their joyous songs in the trees outside, or to the lower and more soothing music of the brook that rippled and gurgled on unceasingly outside the garden hedge. He fancied that he

had never heard such sweet sounds before. It was not the din and roar that he used to hear as he lay in his little room in Primrose Square. There was no strife of sounds. The voice of the brook was like a song, and the laughter of the children on the distant hillside was soothing as a lullaby.

He had lain back among the cushions for the purpose of forming some plan for the future, in case Enoch's fears respecting his grandfather should be realised; but the effort of thinking was too great, and after one or two unsuccessful efforts to fix his mind on the subject that Enoch had suggested for his consideration, he gave himself up to the enjoyment of the quiet and repose of the afternoon.

He had nearly fallen asleep, soothed by the pleasant sounds that floated around him, when he was startled by a gentle knock at the door. For a moment he was not quite certain if he had not been dreaming, but when the knock was repeated he was at rest on that score, and sitting up on the sofa he called out, "Come in," wondering at the same time who the visitor could be. He was not, however, kept in doubt long on that matter, for the next moment the door opened, and there advanced towards him a girl of about his own age, perhaps a little younger, carrying a basket in her hands.

Harry rubbed his eyes for a moment in bewilderment. Could it be the same, or was he dreaming? He never felt so embarrassed before in his life; the next moment the tones of his visitor's voice dispersed the last doubt.

"You are the boy that has met with an accident, are you not?" she said, coming forward.

"I don't know if I ought to call it an accident or no," stammered Harry.

"You are not able to walk, I suppose?" she said, as if she did not heed his reply.

"I am not able to walk just at present," said Harry, "but I hope to be all right again in a few days."

"We heard that you were ill," she said, "and ma has sent you some jelly and a bottle of port wine."

"I'm very much obliged to your ma," said Harry, blushing, "and also to you for bringing it; but if you please I cannot accept the wine."

"Oh yes, you can," was the reply; "it will do you lots of good, ma says so. And I know Mr. Walder would not like you to send it back; you know he is a great friend of ours."

"No, I did not know," said Harry.

"Oh yes, indeed," she went on; "have you not heard him speak of us?"

"No," said Harry; "I've not been here long, and he does not talk much."

"Well, you'll get to know us in time. My name is Ethel Wynne; you can easily remember that, can't you?"

"Oh yes," said Harry, "but I knew that your name was Ethel before you told me."

"You did?" she said, opening her eyes in childish astonishment; "how in the world did you get to know, now? Do tell me."

"I came in the same boat with you the other day from Bristol," said Harry, "and I heard your pa call you Ethel as you stood close by me."

"Well, how funny," she said; "I am certain I did not see you; indeed the only boy I noticed looked like a very poor boy, and he had a bundle tied up in a handkerchief."

"That would be me," said Harry.

"Oh no," she said; "you are nicely dressed, and that boy was not dressed at all well."

"These clothes are new," said Harry, blushing.

"Well," she said, laughing with childish gusto, "I should never have known you again. But what is this you've been doing? Did you really do this yourself? Who was your master?"

"I never had any master," said Harry.

"Never?" she said, raising her eyebrows. "Well, that is funny. I learnt drawing in Clifton; I've been to school at Clifton, you

know. I'll bring you some of my sketches to-morrow for you to look at, if ma will let me."

"Oh, I shall be so glad!" said Harry impulsively.

"Will you?" she said. "Oh, I expect we shall be fast friends after a bit. You know you must come up to see us when you get better."

"May I?" said Harry, looking up in astonishment.

"Of course you must; I want you to know my brother Douglas—he is just glorious; everybody likes him, and I'm sure you will like him, for he is so good and brave. And I am sure you will like ma also. But now tell me why you won't drink the wine?"

"I'll tell you some other time," said Harry, "but I cannot drink it, I cannot really; and please tell your ma that I'm not ungrateful, but I really can't."

"Well, you are funny!" said Ethel, and she shook her head till her glorious hair gleamed in the sunshine like threads of gold; "but I must not stay any longer with you now, but I'll come again to-morrow."

"And bring your sketches?" said Harry.

"Oh yes, I'll not forget; good-bye," and the next moment she was gone.

Harry did little but dream the rest of the day. Adam did his best in the evening to get him

to talk, but with little success ; he was in no humour for conversation. And when Adam returned to his own home across the meadows he did so muttering to himself, " Poor bairn, he's hum sick, I reckon, and wants his mammy."





ETHEL'S SKETCHES.

CHAPTER. VIII.

ANXIOUS HOURS.

"The drowsy night-watch has forgot
To call the solemn hour;
Lulled by the winds he slumbers deep,
While I in vain, capricious sleep,
Invoke thy tardy power;
And restless lie, with unclosed eye,
And count the tedious hours, as slow they minute by."

H. KIRKE WHITE.



RUE to her premise, Ethel came again on the following day to see our hero, and brought her portfolio of sketches. Crude, simple drawings most of them were, and yet Harry found a study of them very

helpful to him. Ethel had been well drilled in perspective for one her age, a subject that Harry was utterly ignorant of; of the "science" of drawing he knew nothing, and yet he was far ahead of Ethel in all the qualities that go to make a true artist. But as he listened to her simple explanations they came to him almost like a revelation, making clear much that had puzzled him before, and giving him a clue by which he would be able to unravel many other things which yet lay far beyond his ken.

They made a pretty picture, those two children, sitting side by side on the huge sofa, and bending over some crayon sketch with thoughtful faces and earnest eyes. After the first meeting all shyness had worn off, and before they had known each other a week it seemed to them as if they had known each other all their lives. Ethel came about every other day while Harry remained a prisoner in the house, and never came empty-handed; sometimes her mother came with her, for Mrs. Wynne was the Lady Bountiful of Cwmdare, going everywhere among the sick and poor of the village, cheering by her presence, and by the sweetness of her smile, the hearts of those who were cast down, and helping the doubting ones to a stronger faith in Him who has said. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Mrs. Wynne took quite a fancy to Harry. "I don't know who he is," she said to her husband, "or who he belongs to; but he is a perfect little gentleman," and the same remark she repeated more than once in going around among the sick and poor of the village. For when it became known that Enoch Walder had a boy staying with him at "The Cottage," speculation became rife as to who the boy could be, or "what could have come over Enoch," for he had made no secret of his dislike to children, especially boys of about Harry's age; and curiosity was on the tiptoe to see the lad that had conquered the old man's prejudice and worked his way into Enoch's heart.

Adam Rees was besieged with questions whenever he went up into the village, but Adam was not to be "drawn." The old man felt as if he were the receptacle of a mighty secret, and so became in his own eyes a person of great importance. He fancied, too, that in consequence of this secret he was treated with greater respect in the village; he was not therefore going to bring himself down to the common level by revealing all he knew. So whenever he was questioned Adam shook his head and looked grave and important.

"There's more in all this than any o' you think on," said Adam one evening to a number of

villagers who had gathered round him in the village smithy, where he had gone to get the mule shod.

"But you'd better let us know, Adam, what's the meanin' on it," they said.

"No," said Adam, shaking his head; "but this you may depend on, that me and the maaster knows what we're about, an' we don't care to have our affairs knowed by everybody."

"You an' the maaster! Do Enoch take you into his confidence, then, Adam?" they said in tones of astonishment.

"Ax me no questions," replied Adam, feeling himself to be a person of greater importance than ever; and after that Adam was as mysterious as the Sphinx, if not quite so silent.

A few people possessing more courage than discretion broached the subject to Enoch himself, but they got nothing for their trouble. The old man told them in language more forcible than polite to mind their own business, and leave him to mind his. Unfortunately, as the villagers thought, Mrs. Wynne was not of an inquisitive turn, and though she had visited at "The Cottage," she had made no inquiries of Harry about the matter that was so exercising the mind of Cwmdare, and all the answer she could give to the many questions addressed to her was the

one we have already recorded: "I don't know who he is or who he belongs to; but he is a perfect little gentleman." So with this scant information the gossips had to be content.

Enoch had been away three days, and Harry was getting to feel a little concerned about him. He knew that common report declared that the old man carried a lot of money around with him, and do what he would he could not banish from his recollection the conversation he heard that terrible evening at the "Traveller's Rest." Moreover, to increase his uneasiness, Adam had been telling him during the early part of the day of comparatively recent robberies that had been committed on unprotected travellers in some of the lonely mountain roads. And as the day wore on Harry's vivid imagination began to picture horrible scenes of robbery and violence, in which poor old Enoch was always the helpless victim. Eve had brought him a new-laid egg for tea; but Harry's heart was too full of painful forebodings for him to enjoy it; and as the day waned and the gloaming came silently down the hills, he lay in the silent room watching the shadows deepen, and listening with strained attention for Ned's welcome footfalls, that should tell that his strange benefactor had arrived home in safety.

"As the evening wore on the laughter and shout

of the village children died gradually away, till it ceased altogether. The birds had long since hushed their songs. Even the lowing of the cattle down in the meadows had ceased, but the brook rippled on, only to-night there seemed to be something solemn and sad in its monotone; while the wind, that had been rising ever since the sun went down, moaned and wailed around the corner of the house, and sighed in the poplars that grew in the garden, as if it had some dread secret it wanted to tell, but struggled in vain to make it known.

Harry grew more and more restless and uneasy as the minutes dragged slowly along. If he had only some one to talk to it would not feel so lonely and solemn. Even a cat purring on the sofa by his side would be company, but even that was denied him.

At length big raindrops began to beat against the window pane, and the wind came and went in fitful gusts that told of an approaching storm. Now its voice would die away in the distance, till everything was as silent as the grave, and Harry could hear distinctly the thumping of his own heart. Then it would come on again, softly at first, and its faint whispering seemed to come from miles away. Then louder and nearer, till Harry could hear the sere leaves grating on the gravel as they were swirled in heaps in the garden paths

And louder still, till every window in the house rattled again, and the tall beeches that grew by the lane swayed and groaned in the might of the storm.

During the momentary lulls Harry listened anxiously for the crunching of Ned's hoofs on the gravel, but he listened in vain; not even did Adam's footfall come to cheer him, and he began to wonder if the old couple had forgotten him altogether, or if they considered him well enough to get upstairs unaided. Certainly he was very much better, though still unable to make any use whatever of one of his feet, and if he got upstairs alone, he would have to do so on his hands and knees.

It was already past his usual bedtime, and Harry began to consider the question whether he would try to get upstairs alone or spend the night where he was on the sofa. The room was now quite dark, and the patter of the rain against the window was incessant. He made one or two attempts to move, but somehow felt as if he were rooted to the spot. Every moment his fears respecting Enoch's safety became greater, and the suspense more painful to be borne; and when at length Adam and Eve made their appearance, they found him in a regular fever of nervous excitement.

"Why, what in the world is the matter, young

master?" said Adam, seeing as soon as the lights were brought the state he was in.

"I hardly know," said Harry; "but I feel so anxious about Mr. Walder, and do what I will, I can't help thinking that something has happened to him."

"Oh! never fear," said Adam, "he's all right somewhere's, you may depend on't."

"Yes, indeed," chimed in Eve; "he knows how to take care of hissel', indeed he do."

"But he ought to have been home last night," said Harry.

"Well, that's true," said Adam, pulling his forelock vigorously and looking thoughtful; "but, bless yer, there's no knowin' when he goes away when he'll turn up again. He have the curiouset ways of any man that ever you see, an' that you'll find out afore you've bin here mich longer."

"Indeed, an' that he have," echoed Eve.

"You think he'll turn up again some time, then?" said Harry, somewhat relieved.

"Sure's Moses," said Adam, sententiously.

"Indeed, an' that's true," said Eve. "And now, young master, you'd better let Adam an' me help you upstairs to bed."

Harry made no objection to that, and soon after he was lying alone once more, listening to the roaring wind and to the pelting rain. Though his fears had somewhat subsided they had not

been banished altogether, and try as he would he could not sleep for several hours. And when at length sleep did seal his eyelids, it was only to bring horrible dreams of robbers and murders, in which he saw Enoch vainly stretching out his hands to him for help.

Towards morning, however, he fell into a profound sleep, from which he was aroused by a voice almost close to his ear speaking in excited tones.

"Please get up quick, do! I'm afear'd some'at is the matter."

For a few moments Harry was unable to comprehend who was speaking or what was said, but when he did understand he started up in affright.

"Adam," he said, "what are you doing liere?"

"Please git up, Master Harry," said Adam, with a face white as a sheet; "I'm sadly afear'd some'at have gone wrong wi' the governor."

"Why, what makes you think so?" said Harry. "Have you seen anything or heard anything? What is it all about?" and Harry looked as pale and excited as Adam.

"You've heard nobody come in durin' the night, have you?" questioned Adam, eagerly.

"No," said Harry, "I've heard no one come in, and I did not get to sleep until day began to break. But what is the matter? Do tell me."

"Well," said Adam, bringing out the words slowly, "to tell 'c the truth, Ned's come'd home."

"Without the master?"

"Ay."

For a few moments neither spoke again. Then Harry raised his white, scared face to Adam's, and uttered the one word, "Well?"

"I's afear'd," said the old man, "that he's bin robbed and——"

"And what?" questioned Harry.

"Made away wi'."

Then followed another long pause, after which Harry proceeded to dress, and soon after, by Adam's help, he managed to get into the yard, where Ned was standing quietly with a broken halter dangling from his head, and his nose pressed against the stable-door.

"What's become of the saddle and bridle?" said Harry.

"Don't know," said Adam, "I can't make it out nohow. Ned looks as cool as a cowcumber, and yet it's as clear as starch that some'at is wrong somewhere's."

"But can't you go off in search of him?" said Harry.

"Don't know which way to go more'n Nicodemus," said Adam.

"Go to Cefnnewidd," said Harry.

"What's the use o' that?" was the reply.
"It's three days agone sin' he wur there."

"But could he not be traced from place to place?" questioned Harry.

"'Fraid not," said Adam. "Governor nearly always goes by the rule o' contrary. If he intended to go to a place he 'ad decided on in his own mind, he'd most likely go out o' the village by the opposite end o' it, an' take a round over the hills just o' purpose to put folks off the scent."

"What shall we do then?" said Harry.

"Well," said Adam, "far as I can see just at present, we can do no'wt but wait for some'at to turn up."

Towards evening something did turn up. Tommy Pugh, the tailor, had gone to see his mother, who lived in a village about five miles away, the day previous, and in returning to Cwm-dare that afternoon, he noticed in a lonely part of the road marks of what seemed to have been a severe struggle. The ground was tracked and marked, as if two men had engaged in a wrestling match. The brambles also by the roadside had been beaten down, as if some heavy body had been dragged over them into the adjoining plantation, while on the brambles were hanging some strips of grey tweed which Adam identified as belonging to Enoch Walder's coat.

As the news of Tommy Pugh's discovery spread through the village the excitement became intense. The colliers were made acquainted with it as they returned from their work, and stood in sable groups discussing the *pros* and *cons* of the case. The children listened to the conversation of their elders with scared faces and bated breath ; while in the smithy a number of young men formed themselves into a search expedition, and resolved to start as early as possible next day, and not to give up their quest until—living or dead—Enoch Walder was found.

The general impression, however, was that Enoch would be seen no more alive. The marks of the struggle in the road, the bits of his coat on the brambles, added to the fact that in the early morning the mule had come home alone, all pointed to one conclusion, and that was that Enoch had been “made away” with.

As Harry thought of the fate of the poor old man, he sobbed as though his heart would break. It seemed to him that he had lost the only friend he had on earth. Life never seemed so dark to him as it did that day. He was a stranger in a strange land, helpless and forsaken.

But once more the memory of his mother's words came back to cheer him, “Remember, Harry, that when the worst comes to the worst, we have still a friend in heaven.”



HARRY THORNE'S CONVALESCENCE.

CHAPTER IX.

A NEW EXPERIENCE.

" Better than fame is still the wish for fame,
The constant training for a glorious strife :
The athlete, nurtured for the Olympian game,
Gains strength at least for life."—LORD LYTTON.



EARLY next morning the "search expedition" started for the lonely stretch of road between the hills, with Tommy Pugh as leader. On arriving at the spot, however, where the struggle had taken place, they found that the heavy rain during the night

had obliterated every trace of it, while the brambles had sprung back to their usual condition, and gave no evidence whatever that anything had been either dragged through or over them. In the plantation a diligent search was made in the hope that some clue might be found that would lead to the discovery of Enoch's body, but without avail; and after scouring the whole neighbourhood within a radius of half a mile, they agreed to return again to Cwmdare, and to hold a consultation with their elders as to what further action should be taken in the matter.

They found nearly the whole village awaiting their return with great anxiety, an anxiety that was not lessened in the smallest degree by the tidings they brought. For awhile not a word was spoken; each individual member of the crowd seemed busy with his own thoughts. Then Tommy Pugh mounted a boulder by the roadside, and looking round on the faces that were upturned towards his, said, in as loud tones as he could command—

“Now, neighbours, what's us to do further in this business?”

This was a question evidently more easily asked than answered, and for several seconds the most profound silence reigned. Then a small boy in the outskirts of the crowd shouted out at the top of his voice—

"Here's owd Enoch coming, you'd better ax him, Tommy."

Instantly every eye was turned in the direction indicated by the boy, and there sure enough was Enoch Walder, slowly advancing towards them from the direction of Llanvarcwmtrydd. For a moment utter astonishment sat on every face; this soon gave place to nods and winks and muttered ejaculations. Then the hard lines on the faces began to relax, and smiles became contagious; then the sound of rippling laughter was heard, that rose and fell and burst at last into loud guffaws, and by the time Enoch reached the crowd, hurrah after hurrah rent the air, and went echoing up and down the valley till the hills caught up the shout, and flung it hither and thither, and repeated it again and again.

"What's the meaning of all this?" said Enoch, when at length he could make himself heard.

"We thought you were dead," shouted the crowd, "and you bain't. Hurrah, hurrah!" And again the hills caught up the shout, until the very cattle in the meadows lifted up their heads to listen, and seemed to wonder what had happened, while poor Harry hopped from the sofa to the door, and from the door back again to the sofa, in utter bewilderment, not knowing what to think.

"Well," said Enoch, when quiet was once more restored, "I didn't think, neighbours, ye cared owt about me."

"Thee'rt a good neighbour, Enoch," they shouted; "but the surprise was so sudden, that we were bound to let off steam somehow or blow up."

For a few moments the old man seemed greatly moved. It was the first time he was ever seen to betray any emotion since he came to the village, now well-nigh twenty years ago.

"I've been to Bristol, neighbours," he said, hastily brushing his sleeve across his eyes, as if some painful memories had been awakened; then, without another word, turned and walked slowly down the lane towards his own cottage.

When Harry caught sight of him he sprang up, spite his gathered foot, and threw his arms around his neck and kissed him, then burst into a flood of tears.

"Art thou glad to see me, boy?" said Enoch, kindly.

"Oh yes, so glad!" sobbed Harry. "I thought you were dead when Ned came home without you; and I've no friend left but you."

"Ay, boy, that's true, I fear; thy Granfer Thorne is dead."

"Is he?" said Harry, growing pale at the same time.

"He is, but never fear, boy; I've a proposal to make."

Harry looked up, but did not reply.

"I don't forget," continued Enoch, "that I owe my life to thee, and, selfish old sinner as I am, I'd like to help thee now that thou art in need; and yet I don't want to make a pauper of thee--dost understand?"

"Not quite," said Harry, looking puzzled.

"Well, look here. The Bible says we all belong to the same family, all related, all brethren, in fact; but dost see, boy, if I tell folks that thou art my brother, they'll not only think I'm crazed, but stark mad. What then? Thou shalt be my nevvy, and for the future call me Uncle Enoch; an' I'll feed thee an' clothe thee, an' send thee to school, an' make a man of thee; but on one condition, and that is that when thou gets to be a man, and art able to pay back what I propose to spend on thee, thou dost it. Wilt thou accept my terms?"

"Oh, how can I thank you?" said Harry, taking the old man's hands in both his. "If God will help me you shall never lose anything by your kindness."

"If thou art good God will help thee," said Enoch, "but if thou grows to be such a selfish old sinner as I am, then expect no help from heaven."

"But you are not selfish," said Harry, looking up with brimming eyes. "Don't talk in that way, I don't like to hear you. I'm sure God sent me to you because He knew you were kind."

"Boy, thou canst not see my heart. But never mind that now. It'll be schooling for me an' for thee also; so make haste and get better, and to work as soon as possible."

Thanks to Eve's care and attention, in another fortnight Harry was quite well, and one bright September morning, with his satchel swung over his shoulder, he leapt the brook at the foot of the garden and went bounding across the meadows, past Adam's cottage, with a merry "good morning," and up through the wood by a narrow foot-path; on past "The Grange," where Squire Wynne lived; down the hill on the other side, then up a pleasant valley for half a mile or more; a turn to the left along a carriage drive, and what was once a gentleman's mansion, but now a private school, loomed up among the trees. Harry paused for a moment at the door, then went boldly in.

His first day's experience at school he never forgot, and by evening he was not at all certain of his own identity. During the play-hour at noon several boys gathered round him "to try his metal, and see what sort of stuff he was made of." This performance was anything but pleasant to

our hero. If they had come round him in a friendly manner and tried to cultivate his acquaintance in a proper spirit, Harry would have been only too glad to return their civilities ; but instead of this, they stood around him in a circle and began to poke fun at him, and to annoy him with unpleasant and even insulting remarks. He bore it very patiently for some time, but when one of his tormentors suggested that he was a "charity boy," a remark which was instantly contradicted by the assertion that "old Walder had taken him out of a Reformatory, where he had been sent for horse-stealing," Harry felt the colour rush to his cheeks, and the blood to rush through his veins more rapidly than usual ; but not wishing to get into disgrace, he said, as quietly as possible—

"If you attempt to insult me any more I shall report you to the principal."

"Oh ! whew !" they shouted. " Tell-tale, sneak, coward—at him, Morgan ! "

And Tom Morgan, the biggest boy of the lot, ran up and pinched his ear until his nails almost touched.

"Look here," said Harry, "if you don't stop that game, you'll wish you had." And he tried to get away from them, but Tom Morgan instantly stepped in before him, and putting out his heel threw Harry flat on his face.

This was the last straw, and springing to his feet like a flash of lightning, his passion at white heat, his blood at boiling point, before he knew what he had done he had dealt a crashing blow straight in Morgan's face, bruising his knuckles by the process and felling his opponent to the earth.

"Wait a moment," said Morgan, rising slowly to his feet, and wiping his nose with his white pocket-handkerchief, which was soon dyed a deep crimson, "wait a moment till my nose stops, and then I'll pay him, interest and principal at the same time."

"Never mind, Morgan," said another lad; "here comes Douglas Wynne—he'll settle his accounts for him in quick time."

Meanwhile Harry stood like a young lion at bay, with fists clenched and head thrown back, but pale to the very lips.

"What's the row?" said Douglas, coming forward.

"This boy's been clawing," said several boys in chorus.

"It's a lie!" said Harry.

"What have you done, then?" said Douglas.

"He insulted me," said Harry, still livid with rage, "called me a charity boy, and tripped me up, and I knocked him down; and I'll knock you down, or any other boy that dares insult me again."

"Well spoken, new boy," said Douglas, coming forward. "Give me your hand. I like a boy that's got some pluck in him. What's your name?"

"Harry Thorne."

"Thorne, eh?" said Douglas, grasping his hands. "I've heard my mother and sis speak of you." Then turning to the astonished Morgan, he said, "Look here."

Instantly every eye was turned towards him, for Douglas Wynne was the first boy in the school, and a universal favourite. He was first in mathematics, first in history, first in music, first in drawing. He was the best bat in the school, and the best bowler into the bargain ; he could run faster and leap higher than any other boy on the premises ; he was handsome in appearance, gentlemanly in manners, brave as a young lion, and generous almost to a fault. There was not a boy in the school who did not try to cultivate his friendship, and a lad that Douglas made a "chum" of was envied by all the others.

"Look here, Morgan," he repeated, and astonishment sat on Morgan's face and on the faces of all the others. "You got served jolly well right for insulting a new boy. You ought to be ashamed of yourself ; and mark you this, if any lad attempts to insult Harry Thorne again,

he will have to answer for it to me—that's all I've got to say."

And linking his arm in Harry's the two walked away together. There wasn't a boy in the school that afternoon who did not envy Harry Thorne, and from that day forward he never had occasion to complain of the treatment he received.

Harry was delighted with his new acquaintance, he was so witty and clever and free, so full of spirit and dash, and yet so gentle and generous withal. And Douglas Wynne seemed equally pleased with Harry, and in a few hours after their first meeting the two were fast friends.

" You must come to see us at 'The Grange,' Thorne," said Douglas.

And Harry thought of Ethel, and readily gave his promise. From that day time seemed to fly on golden wings. Harry threw himself into his work with all the zest of a young enthusiast ; he was determined to win his way in the world if it were possible to be done. Enoch should have no cause to complain, if hard work could accomplish the end he sought. He never forgot the old man's words, " I don't want to make a pauper of thee," nor did he forget the conditions that had been imposed ; and these conditions and Enoch's words acted like a spur, and urged him on whenever he felt disposed to lag behind. He was working on borrowed capital, a fact that he never

allowed himself to lose sight of for a single day, and the time would come when that capital would have to be paid back again, or else forfeit his honour and credit. So he was never without a stimulus. Whatever others might do, he could not afford to be idle. He saw the goal before him fixed and definite, and there could be no rest for him until it was reached. So day by day he worked with a will, and never once lost heart or hope.

He did not expect life to be without difficulties. He knew that it was only by hard work—by patient continuance in well doing—that he could attain the end he sought. But hope was high within him, and difficulties were forgotten when he thought of the future.

He was all the better, too, for having the companionship of Douglas Wynne. The grave care-worn look soon passed away from his face, and the shadow of trouble was lifted from his brow. He caught something of the spirit and dash of his friend, and became what he was intended to be—a laughing, merry, light-hearted boy.

And then the fresh mountain air did him good and brought roses to his cheek, while rollicking games of cricket and football, with the long walk morning and evening to and from school, developed his muscles and made him strong.

And so the days sped on, and every day was

bright to Harry. He never troubled himself about the weather. It might be dark without, but he had always sunshine within. Every morning he leapt the brook at the foot of the garden with a laugh and a shout, for it was too much trouble to foot the narrow plank, and went dashing past Adam's cottage with a wild whoop, startling the old man, he declared, "out o' his seven senses."

"I'll be seein' 'im racing across these meadows drownded some o' these mornin's," was a frequent remark of Adam's; but for all that he never tried to put a check on Harry's jumping proclivities, but rather encouraged him to leap a ditch or jump over a gate than go round by the stile.

By the middle of October the woods were in all their glory. All the time Harry could spare from his lessons he was out among the hills, and under the browning trees. Sometimes he was alone, sometimes with Douglas Wynne, but how much he enjoyed these rambles no one could tell. Every day the woods presented to him some fresh beauty, and new tints discovered themselves to his delighted eye at every ramble he took. But one evening the woods presented to him such a scene of beauty that he never forgot it. He was standing at the foot of a hill, and the sun was shining in between the trees at the top, and for a moment it seemed to him as if all the hillside was

ablaze. Every leaf and tuft of moss, every bramble and fern, seemed steeped in golden light. The long avenues might have been paved with gold, and Midas might have walked among the trees and transmuted every twig and stem. One mighty billow of yellow light washed over the forest for five brief minutes, saturating it through and through, then vanished, leaving it dark and sombre and chill. But Harry never forgot the scene, and in after years a circumstance revealed how deep the impression it had made upon his mind.

Sometimes in November, when the trees were stripped of their foliage, Douglas Wynne would come to the top of the hill, and putting two fingers in his mouth would give a shrill whistle, and then bound down the hillside, crunching the fallen leaves with every step. And Harry, hearing the signal, would start up from the sofa and dash down through the garden, and over the brook at a bound, and away across the meadows to meet his friend. And Adam would watch from his cottage door the two lads racing down the valley, and chuckle to himself—

“There never was such boys! I wonder what mischief they’re up to again?”

Then he would go in and light his pipe, and settle himself down quietly to work out the problem.

So time wore on, and Christmas-tide drew near. Harry was as happy as he well could be, and Enoch was more content than he had been for many years past. Harry's company did him good and banished some of the sourness from his nature, and brought light and sunshine again into the old home that had been dark for so many years. And so it happened that while Harry was debtor to Enoch, it was no less true that Enoch was debtor to him.





HARRY DISTRIBUTING ENOCH'S GIFTS.

CHAPTER X.

HARRY IN A NEW CHARACTER.

"Heap on more wood ! the wind is chill ;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still."— SCOTT.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd —
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Merchant of Venice.

ON Christmas Eve Harry began seriously to think that "Uncle Enoch," as he now called him, was not quite right in his head. That he was peculiar in his ways and actions he knew full well, but until the

evening in question he had never for a moment entertained the thought that he was not "quite right," and the bare idea of such a thing made him feel anything but comfortable.

"Look thee here, boy," said Enoch to Harry, as they sat over their tea, "I believe thee'ret willing to oblige me if it's in thy power."

"You'd better try me and see, uncle," laughed Harry.

"Well, then, I will try thee—not only thy willingness to oblige, but thy faith in me also."

For a moment Harry looked up in surprise, for Enoch spoke in a tone that was more than serious, it was deeply solemn.

"Do you want me to do something for you now, uncle?" he said.

"Yes; bolt the door first, so that nobody can come in. Then fetch that bundle out of the chest in my room; here's the key."

Instantly Harry rose to obey, much wondering at the strangeness of the old man's manner. In a few minutes he returned with the bundle, which Enoch requested him to untie at once. Harry was nothing loth to do this, for he was curious to know what it contained. His curiosity, however, was not much lessened when he discovered a suit of clothes of some drab material and of very ancient make. Knee-breeches, vest, and coat with a very high collar, long skirts,

and wide, gaping pockets. There were also a pair of grey stockings, a pair of low shoes with brass buckles, a silk hat with a very wide brim, and apparently much worn, and last, but not the least curious, a false beard, very long, and white as wool.

"Well, boy," said Enoch, at length, "what dost thou think of those?"

"They are very curious," said Harry; "but they'll not fit you, uncle, they're too small."

"But they'll fit thee."

"But surely, uncle," said Harry, "you do not wish me to wear clothes like these."

"I do, though; and what is more, I wish thee to get them on at once."

"Oh, uncle—" began Harry.

"No grumbling," said Enoch; "I thought thou said thou wert willing to oblige me."

"So I did," said Harry, the tears gathering in his eyes, "but this is so funny. I shall look a perfect fright."

"What's the odds?" grunted Enoch; "but it seems thou canst not trust me after all."

"Oh yes, I can," said Harry, "only I never knew you act so strangely before."

"Dost think I'm gone off my head, lad?"

"Oh no—that is—I don't know," stammered Harry, feeling quite bewildered.

"Well," grunted Enoch, "thee needn't blush

boy, for I'm not quite certain on that score myself, so get on these togs quick."

Harry felt that there was no help for it, so he proceeded to obey orders.

"These new things are big enough to put on over thy other clothes, so thou'l be warm enough," said Enoch, with a grin. And in a short time he was contemplating with evident satisfaction our hero's personal appearance.

"Thou'l do, thou'l do famcously," he chuckled; "the beard fits thee like an old shoe, but we must whiten thy hair a bit."

"Oh, but, uncle——" began Harry again.

"Say now't about it, boy; thou said'st thou could trust me, and I'll keep thee to thy word. There, now, that'll do," he said, at length, and he stood back to have a good look at Harry.

"Capital!" he ejaculated; and he laughed till the tears ran down his face. "Thou looks like Father Christmas and Santa Claus rolled into one. Thy own mother wouldn't know thee were she alive." And he laughed again till his sides shook with merriment.

Poor Harry was utterly bewildered. He had never seen Enoch laugh before. It was so strange to see the old man making merry over anything. And Harry became more and more convinced that he was getting wrong in his head.

"I don't see anything to laugh about," said Harry, feeling more inclined to cry.

"Thou dostn't? Then go and look at thyself in the glass; thou art a perfect picture."

"I think it is too bad, uncle," said Harry, with trembling lips, "to make a guy of me only to laugh at."

"So it is, boy, so it is; but I have another object in view, thou mayest be sure, so sit thee down in the easy chair, and let me give thee further instructions. Whew! how the wind roars to-night. Stir up the fire, boy, and heap on the coals, we must have it warm within if it's cold without. There, that will do. Whir-r-r, the wind is getting up. If I were twenty years younger I should like to be out to-night, for the snow is coming down in grand style, the ow'd woman is plucking her goose with a vengeance, and the feathers are playing hide and seek and kiss me quick as never was. Whir-r-r!" and Enoch rubbed his hands with glee as the fire crackled cheerily in the grate and the wind went roaring up the chimney.

"You seem very merry to-night, uncle," said Harry, feeling rather piqued at the old man's mirth.

"Ay, boy, I be," said Enoch; "I've not felt so merry on a Christmas Eve before since—, but never mind when. And now to business

Whir-r-r, ain't this a grand night? We're going to have a real old-fashioned Christmas. Whew! I hope thou'l be able to stand agin' it, boy."

"Stand against it! What do you mean, uncle? You are not going to send me out such a night as this, and with these clothes?"

"Ay, boy, thou hast hit it; that is just what I be going to do."

Harry made no reply to this, but he felt quite sure now that the old man was insane, and concluded that it was best not to provoke him, or he might get violent.

Going to a drawer in the room and unlocking it, Enoch took out about a dozen small brown paper parcels, each neatly tied with pink twine.

"Now, boy," said Enoch, "thou mayest start any time, for nobody will be out to-night. Everybody will be enjoying their Christmas Eve, or trying to do, by their own firesides. But in Cwmdare there are a dozen widows who will not enjoy it much unless thou makes haste, for they are poor, and mostly old. God help them! To these people go, boy, and to each give one of these parcels; they will not know thee, thou art beyond recognition. Answer no questions; tell them not who thou art, or where thou comes from, and tarry not at any house. Knock at each door, and give into the widow's own hand the parcel, and let thy answer be, 'My master hath

sent me to do his will.' If any thank thee say to them, 'Give thanks to God,' and go thy way speedily, for the night is wild, and back to thy home, boy, as soon as possible ; but let no one follow thee, or see thee enter this house. Now go, and God be with thee. Dost understand ? "

"Yes," said Harry, "I think I do ; but will you tell me, uncle, what these parcels contain ? "

"No ! at least, not now, so go thy way."

Putting on the broad-brimmed hat, and leaning heavily on a staff as Enoch had given him instructions, Harry went forth into the wild night to execute his mission. He walked with noiseless footfalls, for the snow was already deep, and still falling. The village seemed deserted as he walked swiftly and silently through it, for the night was too dark and stormy for any to venture out unless they were compelled to do so.

Pausing for a moment at the door of Widow Davis, to regain his breath, he gave a loud rat-tat-tat with his stick, then waited for the door to open. He had not long to wait ; slowly and cautiously the door was opened, and as soon as the old woman caught sight of Harry she began—

"I'm sorry for you, poor old man, this is no fit night for one of your age to be out ; but I have nothing to give you, for, alas, I have nothing for myself. But you can warm yourself if——"

She did not finish her sentence, however.

"My master hath sent me to do his will," said Harry, in a voice that did not at all accord with his feeble and aged appearance, and instantly put a parcel into the old woman's hand.

"Why, who are you, or what is this?" stammered the old woman; but Harry had turned a corner, and was out of sight.

"Well, if I ever!" she said, after staring a long time into the darkness. "I wonder what it means?" and she drew back into the room, and commenced to untie the parcel. One layer after another she took off, and the parcel began to grow very small indeed. At length she came to a small slip of printed paper with the words in large type:—

"From one who would like to be
a disciple, but is not worthy."

"Well, how queer!" she said, as she continued to take off the wrappings. Now a small box disclosed itself. Lifting the lid there was another slip of printed paper with the verse:—

"I have been young, and now am old, yet have
I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed
begging bread."

Taking out the paper, there was disclosed, lying at the bottom of the box, a golden sovereign.

For several seconds the old woman gazed at it in speechless amazement. Then falling on her

knees, she clasped her hands together, and cried out, "Forgive me, Lord, for ever doubting Thee. I do not know who brought it, but I am sure Thou didst send it; help me never to mistrust Thee again."

In the other houses that Harry visited there were similar manifestations of wonder and gratitude. And long before the poor women had recovered from their astonishment Harry was once more safe and snug at home.

"Now, boy," said Enoch, "take off thy wet things, and draw up to the fire. Did anyone recognize thee?"

"No," said Harry; "but several of them seemed troubled to see such a poor old man out on such a stormy night," and he laughed at the remembrance of the new character he had assumed, and also at his fears respecting Enoch's sanity. It all seemed clear to him now. "But won't you tell me now, uncle, what these parcels contained?"

"On condition that thou never reveals my secret, I will."

"Oh, I'll never tell, uncle, if you don't wish it to be known."

"Well, then, I sent those poor people a sovereign a piece."

"Twelve pounds," said Harry, as if speaking to himself; then looking up into the old man's

face he said, "But why did you not give them the money yourself, and let them know the name of their benefactor? I don't see the use of all this trouble and mystery?"

"Boy," said Enoch, solemnly, "thou dost not know what it has cost me to give that money. It has been as painful as parting wi' my nerves, but I've done it to spite myself, to conquer this selfish old nature that has been the curse o' my life. But when I'd got that far my pride cropped up, and said, 'Enoch, don't make a secret o' it; do it openly, and you'll get talked about, and your name will get into the newspapers, and you'll be made quite a hero of.' Well, boy, thou dost not know what a temptation that was to me, for I would like to be talked about in that way; I can't deny it. The praise of man is sweet, boy. But I know if I gave way to the temptation every bit of virtue there might be in the act would be taken out of it, and so I stood my ground and conquered, and I think, boy, I was never so happy before in my life. I've been a thinking while thou hast been out how the hearts of these poor widows will be rejoicing to-night, and I tell thee, boy, I've got my reward. Now for some warm coffee, and then to bed."

When Harry knelt by his bedside that night he did not forget to pray for Enoch, nor to ask for grace that he might be made more like him.

To Harry that night Enoch seemed a saint that was ripe for immortality.

The talk of Cwmdare next day was the strange little old man that had gone through the village the night before—through wind and blinding snow—to carry succour to the poor and needy, and the more the subject was discussed the more wonderful it seemed. It could not be a fabrication, for twelve widows could show a sovereign each, and their descriptions of the stranger all agreed. Of course, the story grew. It was discussed as they went to and from church and chapel that Christmas Day. It was talked about over the dinner-table in nearly every cottage ; it was the theme around the fireside when the candles were lighted, and the blinds drawn, and for many a day after little else was talked about. Enoch heard most of the stories that were afloat, and he chuckled with inward satisfaction ; but the secret was well kept, and if the villagers knew the name of their benefactor, it was not until long after.

The day after Christmas Harry was invited to a juvenile party at the Grange. When he heard that there were to be a large number of young people from all the neighbourhood round about he begged to be excused, but neither Douglas nor Mrs. Wynne would hear of it. Ethel, however, settled the matter ; putting her little hand upon

his, she said, " You must come, Harry," and after that he raised no further objection.

When he arrived at the Grange, every room seemed ablaze with light, and well-dressed boys and girls were moving hither and thither to the sweet strains of violin and harp. At first he felt quite confused, and getting into a corner of the drawing-room he begged Douglas and Ethel to let him remain quiet, at least for awhile. He soon got used to the scene, however, and long before the evening ended he was able to take his part in the charades, and in the games of blind-man's-buff and hunt the slipper with the gayest of them.

Ethel moved around among her guests like a little fairy. Harry never tired of watching her. To him she seemed the perfection of grace and beauty.

In the refreshment-room Douglas poured out a glass of wine for our hero. " Here, Harry," he said, " drink this; we want you to sing directly, and this will steady your voice for you."

" Thank you, Douglas," said Harry, " I will sing if you wish it, but I cannot drink that."

" Not like port, eh? then have some sherry."

" No, no," replied Harry, " I don't want anything to drink."

" Oh, yes, you do," said Douglas; " but wait a moment, I know where the governor keeps his champagne. I'll get you a glass of that."

"Oh, no, don't," said Harry in affright; "really, Douglas, I don't drink. Don't press me, please."

"Nonsense, Harry; you are not such an old woman as to be a teetotaller, surely?"

"I don't think I'm an old woman, as you call it, for being a teetotaller," responded Harry; "but I promised mammy when she was dying that I would never drink strong drink, and I mean to keep my promise."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Well, I'll help you out;" and raising the glass he had filled for Harry he drained it at a draught.

"I am afraid, Douglas," said Mrs. Wynne, coming forward, "that you are making too free with the wine to-night;" and she brushed back the brown locks from his flushed forehead with her smooth white hand.

"Oh, nonsense, mother," he responded, gaily; "I'm as steady as Old Time yet."

"Well, don't drink any more to-night."

"Not till I'm thirsty, mother," he answered, as he went laughing into the drawing-room.

Harry needed no wine to steady his voice. He knew only two or three simple songs, but he sang with exquisite taste, and with a voice more rich and full than the finest organ tones.

"Why, Harry," said Douglas in astonishment, "I had no idea you were such a singer."

"Please do sing again, Harry," said Ethel. And Harry gladly obeyed, and sang that evening all the songs he knew.

It was midnight when he left the Grange, and wended his way down through the plantation towards his home. He was in such an ecstacy of delight that he walked as one in a dream, every nerve was tingling with the most delightful sensations. He was happier than once he thought it possible to be on earth. Suddenly, however, he stopped in the heart of the plantation, for just before him he heard a heavy step crunching the frozen snow, and the next moment a man muffled to the very eyes stood before him, and blocked the path.

Harry was about to rush past, but the man stretched out his hand and muttered, in a hoarse voice—

"Not so fast, youngster; now I have caught you I don't intend to let you go so easily;" and putting two fingers in his mouth he gave a shrill whistle.

Harry's heart stood still for a moment, for the voice was the same that he had heard four months before at the "Traveller's Rest."



HARRY'S FATHER.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS FATHER.

"All else is gone ; from those great eyes
The soul has fled :
When faith is lost, when honour dies,
The man is dead !"—J. G. WHITTIER.



N a solemn wood, at midnight, after five long years, Harry stood face to face with "his father." But the recognition was all on one side. Owen Thorne knew his son, but Harry did not know him. How should he know ? For years he had believed him

dead, and in those years he had tried to remember what was good in “his father,” and to forget the evil. His mother had never spoken of him but with kindness, magnifying his virtues and excusing his faults. And so the boy had, to a certain extent, learnt to look at him through rose-coloured spectacles. And though he could not altogether forget the neglect, and misty recollections of unkind words came back to him sometimes, yet, believing that he was dead, the passing months and years had toned down and subdued all that was unpleasant and regretful, and had raised into prominence the better traits of his character, though, alas! they were very few.

It was not likely then that Harry should recognize this muffled figure that stood before him. True, the light was dim and the man’s face almost entirely hidden; but Harry had seen that face once, and was not likely ever to forget it.

It was well, perhaps, for him that he did not recognize his father just then, for it would have utterly overcome him, and rendered him powerless to act. Yet the painful fact would have to be forced upon him sooner or later, that this depraved and cruel man was his own father, that he was the son of a drunkard, a housebreaker, and possibly a murderer. It would be a terrible revelation when it came, but it was not to be just yet.

Owen Thorne had been watching his opportunity for several days—or rather nights—past for entrapping his son. He had learnt that he had once come very near entrapping him in an uncoffined grave, and very thankful he was—if he could be thankful for anything—that he had been saved from taking his own child's life. Not that he had any affection for his son. A man that could leave a delicate wife and a young child, for more than five years, to the tender mercies of the world, could not be expected to have much love for anything. He had dandled Harry when he was a bright-eyed baby on his knee, and seemed to be very fond of him. But drink and low life had crushed little by little every spark of affection out of his heart, and had converted him into an unfeeling brute.

He had made his way to Primrose Square, after leaving the “Traveller's Rest,” where he learnt of the death of his wife. But he heard the news unmoved: in fact, if the truth must be told, he was glad she was gone. True, he had promised to love her once, and very likely he would have done so to the last but for drink. That killed his love, crushed out his manhood, brought into play all the baser passions of his nature, and made him what he was—an outcast under heaven.

Amy Thorne never touched the drink herself,

and yet drink killed her. It shattered her idol, and that broke her heart. It made her toil from dawn to sunset, and sometimes till far on into the night, to earn, alas, what was not enough to keep body and soul together when her child had had his share; and so she sank beneath the strain at last, and died before her time.

What did Owen Thorne care for that? And there are thousands like him in the world to-day. If he could get money to purchase drink, that was all he cared about. It is very much to be questioned whether he would have hesitated to have put his foot on Harry's neck and trample out his life if he stood in his way. But he was thankful now that his boy was living, because he saw—or thought he saw—how he could make use of him. He had not ventured into the neighbourhood of Cwmdare for several weeks after that night at the “Traveller's Rest.” He knew that he and his companion were wanted by the police, so he had kept away for two or three months, that the neighbourhood might settle down into its normal state of quiet.

He knew the neighbourhood well. He had spent his early life in the little village of Cefnnewydd, not so many miles away. His father had died there not so long ago. He was glad of that also. He knew Enoch Walder, had known him for years, and had long resolved that, by some

means or other, he would get a share of the old man's money. Hence, when he discovered that Enoch had adopted his son, he was delighted beyond measure. He would get at the old man and his money through the boy.

Having come to that resolve, he set about carrying his plans into effect. By some means he must get hold of the boy when he was alone, and inform him that lie was his father. That would seal the boy's lips. He would never inform against his own father, he was sure. Presuming upon that relationship, he could also command obedience, and the boy must be made to understand that. If he could be persuaded to enter into and help to carry out his plans, so much the better; if not, compulsion must be used. But Owen Thorne had no fear but that he could bend Harry to his own will.

One thing he most sincerely hoped, and that was that Harry had not seen him at the "Traveller's Rest," for he had no wish that his boy should know that the intended murderer of Enoch Walder and his own father were one and the same person; such knowledge, he thought, might seriously militate against his plans.

He had seen Harry go to "The Grange," and with his companion Luke watched for his return. Luke guarded the lane, while he took up his position near the foot-path in the plantation.

He was nearly frozen with cold when Harry appeared on the scene, but he considered himself well repaid, for the opportunity was such a splendid one. No one was about, nor likely to be at that time of night.

"What do you want?" said Harry, when he had recovered a little from his fright.

"I want you, my boy," was the answer.

"But I have no money," said Harry.

"You know where it is kept, though. But it is you we want just at present, we'll talk about the money further on." And again his father put his finger in his mouth and gave a shrill whistle.

"Is that to call Luke?" said Harry, now trembling with terror and scarcely knowing what he said, yet calling vividly to his mind that night at the "Traveller's Rest."

"Do you know me?" said his father, in quick, sharp tones.

"I'm afraid I shall never forget you," said Harry; "but——" (and at that moment there fell on his ears the sound of heavy footfalls behind him) "do you intend to murder me, as you intended once before? Oh, heavens!" And he made a dash past him.

But Owen Thorne was not to be foiled; in an instant he had grasped Harry by the collar of his coat. But with an energy born of terror and

despair, Harry burst off every button with the quickness of thought, and before his father was aware he had slipped out of his coat and was bounding down the hill-side like a startled hare.

For a moment Owen Thorne seemed stupefied, then, dropping the coat, he gave chase; but it was of no use, Harry was soon far ahead of him. He hoped that the boy would fall, but Harry was too well used to the way for that. Recklessly he ran, but with perfect safety, till he burst in upon Enoch, who was nodding in his chair, and then fell fainting upon the floor.

"Look here, Luke," said Owen Thorne, when he saw that Harry had escaped, "we must be off with all possible haste, and not show in this neighbourhood again for another six months."

"How so?"

"Because the boy knows us.

"Knows that you are his father?"

"No; I wish he did—we should be safe then. But he knows that we are the party that was at the 'Rest,' and the party that's wanted by the police."

The next day the officer of the law made eager search and diligent inquiry, but without avail. The public mind of Cwmdare, however, was scarcely disturbed about the matter, for no house had been broken through or robbery committed, and the one policeman in the village was dis-

posed to believe that the lad had been mistaken, or that someone had been playing him a practical joke.

Harry was several days before he got over his fright, and several weeks before he ventured out after dark alone. But Enoch was troubled most of all. Some very painful suspicions had been aroused in his mind, and do what he would he could not get free of them. For several weeks they haunted him night and day; but he kept them to himself, and Harry never knew of the old man's dark forebodings.

As spring advanced and the days got longer, Harry was out on the hills again, feeling as free and as happy as ever. During most of his excursions in search of rare flowers or pleasant nooks to sketch, Douglas Wynne kept him company, and sometimes, when the weather was more than usually fine, Ethel made one of the party. But when the weather kept them indoors Douglas would come down to the cottage, or Harry would go up to the Grange, and help to finish the sketches of his little friend. For Harry was as passionately fond of painting as ever, and soon stood far ahead of all the school in this particular branch. These were happy times, the hush and lull before the coming storm, for day by day the storm was gathering, and the terrible thunder-burst of misery was sure to come.

Douglas was to go to Rugby to school after Midsummer—that was the only cloud that Harry saw on the horizon of his life; but he would be back again at Christmas, so he did not fret much. But the boys were determined to have as inuch of each other's company as possible before Douglas went away.

Mrs. Wynne said they were almost as inseparable as the Siamese twins, nevertheless she was pleased to see them so much together. They had wonderful plans respecting the future, and sometimes Ethel was the audience while they discussed them. “I shall ‘grind’ hard at Rugby, you know,” said Dougias. “Then I shall go to Oxford and win my degree, and then—and then I shall be articled, you know; for I’m going to be a barrister, Harry. And, oh! sha’n’t I astonish the judges, and juries too!” And he threw back his head, and ran his fingers through his locks, and looked as if he meant it. And Ethel laughed and clapped her hands, and said, “I’m sure you will, Douglas; and sha’n’t I be proud of you!”

“And I shall be an artist,” said Harry, flushing with pleasure at the thought; “and some of those sketches that I’ve made are to grow into pictures that will make the country ring with my name.” And Ethel clapped her hands again, and entered into the boy’s enthusiasm with childish glee.

“And what will you be, sis?” said Douglas.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, laughing; "I never thought about it."

"But I know," said Harry.

"What is it, then?" the brother and sister cried together. And Harry laughed, but refused to tell.

Even Enoch entered into the boy's plans and seemed to be growing young again. Cwmdare was unanimous in declaring that "never so great a change had come over a man in so short a time as over Enoch Walder." His hatred of mankind, of which he spoke with such vehemence to Harry on the occasion of their first meeting, seemed to have vanished altogether, and to have given place to an altogether different feeling, and he discovered, notwithstanding he had protested to the contrary a hundred times over, that there was a little kindness in the world, and a little gratitude too. He had given up his solitary rambles among the hills at night, and had deserted his cave altogether. "There's no place like home, boy, after all," he said to Harry one evening; "and the older I get the better I seem to like it."

Among the first to notice and appreciate the change in him were the village boys. He gave up snarling at them, and declaring that he detested them, and they in their turn gave up teasing him and calling him names. In fact,

they declared one evening in solemn conclave, "that Enoch was not such an old sour crust, after all."

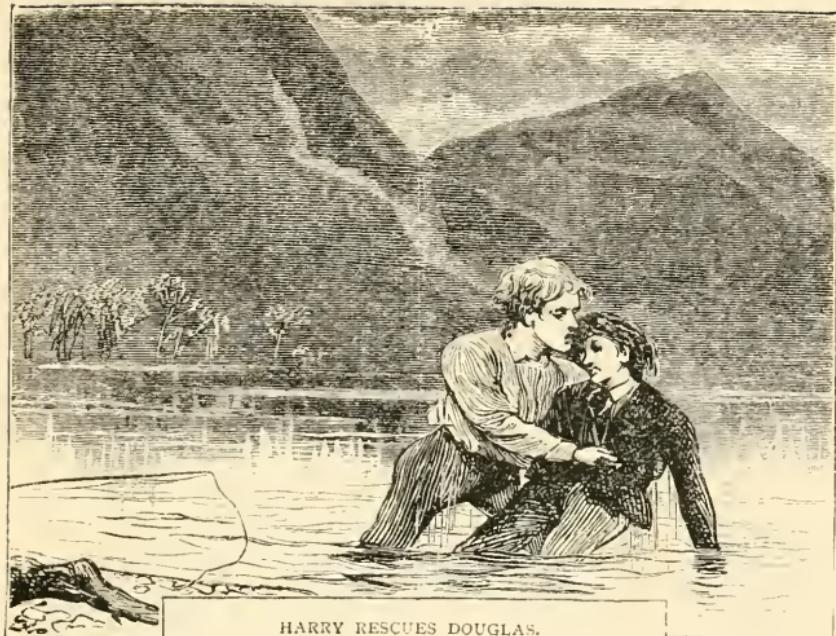
Enoch rather wondered at the better treatment he received from "those detestable boys," as he had been in the habit of calling them. But Adam saw through it at once.

"Clear as starch," soliloquised the old man, as he walked slowly home across the meadows one evening. "If you snarls at folks, folks snarls at you, 'specially boys. Everybody kicks 'edge-hogs, 'specially boys; 'cause 'edgehogs always set up their prickly backs agin everybody, and its natur' to pay back folks in the coin they gives. Now if he'd a' given those boys kind words instead o' snarls, and nuts instead o' whipcord, they'd a' done anything for him a'most; but he didn't, but kept always a telling how he detested 'em. Well, boys is boys, that's what I says to Eve, and don't like to be in folks' debt. So they took care not to let him detest 'em for nothing. Very proper, too, according to my calculations. Well, now, lie's coming round, and they's coming round too; liuman natur' that. Lor' bless us, but that boy coming amongst us have been a great marcy; he's made the governor into a new man." And the old man quickened his pace, so that he might get in and light his pipe and pursue his meditation at his leisure.

The spring days passed away all too rapidly for Harry. He almost wished sometimes that time would stop, for he felt somehow that he could never be happier than he was then. It did Enoch's heart good to see the boy enjoy life so much, and often the old man would take out his chair into the garden about the time that Harry would return from school, and watch for his coming. He could generally hear him long before he saw him, for nearly every evening, when Harry left Douglas at the Grange, he would start up some song directly after, and sing the rest of the way home. And Enoch would smile and say, "Bless the boy!" as the song echoed from hill to hill, while the singer made his way down the plantation path towards his home.

But the sky got darker and darker all the while, and those happy days were fast coming to an end.





HARRY RESCUES DOUGLAS.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORM BURSTS.

"The fountain of my heart dried up within me;
With naught that loved me, and with naught to love,
I stood upon the desert earth alone.
And in that deep and utter agony,
Though then than ever most unfit to die,
I fell upon my knees and pray'd for death."

C. R. MATURIN.

ABOUT two miles from Cwmdare in the direction of the "Traveller's Rest" was a mountain tarn, where Harry and Douglas frequently went fishing during the Midsummer holidays. This small mountain lake was of unknown depth, and was bounded on

three sides by precipitous cliffs, and on the fourth by a broad bank that spanned the narrow dingle that led up to it. It was a lonely spot, shut in on nearly every side by dark frowning hills, and where the silence was unbroken save for the gentle lapping of the waves on its narrow strand, and the whispering of the wind in the clumps of mountain ash that fringed its shore. To anyone that had been used to the ceaseless hum and roar of city life, the silence would have been oppressive, and they would have been glad to get away from a place so weird and solemn. But to Harry and Douglas it was a delightful retreat. The clumps of trees gave to the spot a picturesque appearance, and the cool shadows they flung were grateful and refreshing when the day was hot and the sky unflecked by clouds.

Neither Douglas nor Harry were very good fishers. For one thing they found a great difficulty in keeping quiet long enough for the fish to bite; sometimes Harry forgot all about it and would start up a song, and his magnificent voice would trill and echo among the mountains in wild, sweet melody, till Douglas would say deprecatingly, "Harry, Harry, you seem to forget that those fish have no ear for music."

And Harry would stop suddenly and say, "Beg pardon, Douglas; I did forget, but it bubbles over sometimes before I am aware."

But there were others besides Douglas that heard the songs and chuckled at the thought of making profit out of a voice so fine.

One bright afternoon Douglas espied a rare specimen of fern growing out of the side of the cliff overhanging the lake, and instantly made up his mind to get it. He said nothing to Harry, who was intent upon a book, but made his way gently and cautiously along the face of the cliff toward the coveted plant. Suddenly Harry was startled by a shriek, followed in a moment after by a plunge ; and looking up from his book Douglas was nowhere visible, but the troubled water of the lake with its spreading rings told where his friend had disappeared. Harry had learned to swim a little, and instantly pulling off his coat and boots he waited till Douglas should come to the surface. Would he never rise ? It seemed minutes since he had disappeared. At length ! But, alas ! he was farther away from the narrow strand than where he had fallen in. Douglas struck out blindly, but he found it impossible with his saturated clothes to keep afloat, and before Harry could reach him he had disappeared again. A second time he came to the surface, but only for a moment, and Harry in that moment failed to grasp him. Still Harry did not give up hope ; he had heard it said that drowning people always came to the surface

three times, and fortunately for him his feet had touched a projecting ledge of rock, and so he was able for the moment to keep his head above water without difficulty. The next moment he saw a black patch on the surface of the water close to him; to grasp it was the work of an instant. It was Douglas's hair, and his hand tightened round it like a vice of iron; but how should he reach the shore with such a burden? He did not know. He could but fail, he thought, and then he and his friend would die together. One thing he was resolved upon, he would save Douglas or die with him.

How he reached the bank he never knew, but it was the ledge of rock that saved them both. Douglas was some time before he recovered, and the afternoon was far advanced when they went home together; but no song echoed among the hills that night, nevertheless Harry's heart was full of devout thanksgiving, and words of praise to God were continually on his lips.

The next day was Sunday, and special thanksgiving was made for both boys both in the Sunday-school and in the house of prayer. The morning service was a delightful time to Harry. Douglas was there, looking pale and thoughtful. Ethel was there, and in Harry's eyes she looked more beautiful than ever. Mrs. Wynne was there, with her pale beautiful face beaming with grati-

tude. Even old Squire Wynne was there, a circumstance that had not transpired for twelve months at least: and what was more, he seemed quite sober.

Harry was made quite a hero of during the next few days, but sweet as it was to be thanked by Ethel and Mrs. Wynne, the knowledge that he had saved Douglas from a watery grave was sweetest of all. How thankful he was for that none could tell, and yet had he known what he knew years after, how different would have been his feelings.

Shall I write what is in my heart to write? for this, at least, is not fiction. As I look back over years long past and gone, Douglas's face comes up before me, as he was when a boy. And, oh! what a face—so pure and noble and good. I do not wonder that his sister was proud of him, or that he was the apple of his mother's eye; his smile spread over his face like sunshine, his voice sounded like music. Everybody that knew Douglas loved him, for there did not seem to be a particle of meanness in his nature. I single him out among the many boys I knew, the brightest, bravest, handsomest of all. And yet, knowing what I know to-day, I cannot help saying it—I may be mistaken, and God grant that I may be—but knowing what I now know, it seems to me that it had been better, a thousand times better

if Harry Thorne had never saved him. Oh ! Douglas, Douglas ! if thou hadst died then—if thine eyes had closed for ever in the still clear waters of that mountain lake, thou hadst been safe for ever. But, oh ! Douglas, where art thou now ?

But I will anticipate the events of this story no further. Harry did not know to what he had saved his friend, and it was well he did not. A week later Harry and Douglas agreed to go up to the lake again, but when the time came Douglas was prevented and Harry went alone. He had scarcely reached the bank when a man started out of one of the clumps of trees and laid his hand upon his shoulder ; Harry looked up, and saw that face again that he could never forget. The next moment another man started out from a clump of trees on the other side of him, and Harry saw at a glance that he was a prisoner

“ What do you want with me ? ” he said at length, trembling with excitement and terror.

“ Don’t be frightened,” said the man, whose hand still rested on his shoulder. “ We are not going to harm you, but as we have waited a long time for the opportunity of seeing you alone, we are not going to let you go without a little talk.”

“ But you have no right to detain me,” said Harry, regaining his courage a little.

“ Oh, yes, I have,” sneered the man. “ Now

listen ! It's not likely you should know me, but I'm your father. I am Owen Thorne."

"Oh, no, no!" wailed Harry. "Don't say that ; oh ! no, you cannot be my father." And yet by some strange intuition he felt that the man told him the truth, and with a low cry he sank to the ground. The world had become suddenly dark to him, and hope and joy had died out of his heart in one brief minute. He did not want to get away from these men now, he would have liked to have lain down there and died.

"Come, boy," said Owen Thorne, "you needn't look like that. One would think you had lost your father instead of found him," and he laughed a cruel, mocking laugh ; but Harry did not reply.

"Now, look here, boy," he went on ; "I am your father, and I expect to be obeyed. You know it won't do for us to be seen in this neighbourhood. Very good. We want a partner in this quarter that can help to carry on our business. Well, we have found one ; that is you. We are hard up at present ; we want money, and money we must have. Enoch Walder has plenty, and we intend to finger some of it ; but we can't do it without your help, unless we resort to violence. That's risky, and we don't want to do it. But you live with the old screw, and you will be able to get at some of his brass without difficulty, and you can hand it over to us. I've

made a vow that I will have some of his money, and I will have it; I'd rather have his than anybody's. I owe him a grudge, I hate him; he wronged me, insulted me years ago, and I'll pay him out. Now, do you understand?"

"Do you mean," said Harry, turning up his anguished face, "that you want me to rob Mr. Walder, and give you the money?"

"Precisely," grinned his father; "that's just it. He has lots of houses in Cwmdare. The rents are about due now, and I find that you pick up his rents for him occasionally. Very good; nothing is easier. You just hand the money over to us instead of to Enoch; that will help us on a bit until you can get hold of some more. Say to him that you lost the money, or that the folks put off paying the rent for another quarter, if he asks you anything about it; but, anyhow, you must get us some money."

"Say no more," said Harry, rising to his feet, his face livid, his hands clutched until the nails cut into the flesh. "I'll never do it—never! You may do what you like with me—you may threaten me, beat me, kill me, drown me, do anything by me—but I'll never do it, never!"

For a moment his father stared at him in astonishment, then he began to coax him. "I'm starving, Harry," he said; "you must help me, there's a good lad."

"Help you to do wrong?" said Harry, indignantly. "Never! I never will." Then he burst into tears. "Oh, my father," he wailed, "for I feel you are my father, how can you ask your boy to be a thief?"

"It won't be thieving to take Enoch's money," he said; "I have a right to some of it."

"What right?" said Harry.

"Never you mind," was the reply. "That's a secret just yet, but you shall know in time if you will help me in this."

"Don't press me any more," said Harry; "for I never will, never! I'll die first."

"Oh, will you?" sneered his father; "we'll see about that, and if fair means won't do, we'll try something not quite so pleasant. Here, Luke," he said, addressing the other man, who had stood by without speaking, "hold this young dog while I take down his courage a bit."

"You needn't hold me," said Harry; "I'll not try to run away."

To cut down a stout twig of mountain ash was the work of a minute, and to pull off Harry's coat the work of another; then Owen Thorne raised the stick to strike.

"Now, boy," he said, "if you'll promise, I'll not touch you; but if not, I'll beat you till you do promise. Will you do what I want you to do?"

"Oh, father!" said Harry, looking up with tearless eyes, "if you want me to work for you, beg for you, or even die for you, I will do it; but I cannot be a thief. Father, how can you ask me?"

"Then you'll not do as I bid you?"

"No, father, I cannot."

The next moment he was writhing in agony beneath the cruel stripes that were rained on his back and shoulders. He did not cry out at first, but at length he could bear it no longer, and he shrieked with pain.

"Now, then," roared his father, "will you do what I bid you now?"

"No," said Harry; "I'll die first."

"Here, Luke, stuff this handkerchief in his mouth to stop his yelling."

This done, the blows fell faster and more furious than ever. He could not cry out now, but after awhile the blows did not hurt so much; then a noise came into his ears, and the trees began to spin around; then a mist crept over his eyes that grew denser and darker, till he felt himself sinking down, down, down! Then all became a blank.

When he recovered consciousness he found himself lying on a hard bed in a low, desolate-looking room; and yet, as he glanced wearily around him, it seemed that the room was familiar

to him. "Yes, it's the same," he said, raising himself painfully on his elbow; "but I'll not try to get out of the chimney this time. I don't care what becomes of me. I hope I'll die."

Then he tried to pray, and while he prayed the words of his dying mother came back to him, and it seemed to him his duty became more and more clear.

"He is my father," he said, at length, "and I must not forsake him. I must help him, if I can, to be a better man; it was mammy's wish that I should be kind to him. Dear mammy, she thought he would come back to his old home; but, oh! to think he should have come back like this." And Harry hid his face in the bedclothes and burst into tears.

Meanwhile a very different scene was being enacted at Cwmdare. When Harry did not return at his usual time to tea Enoch got anxious, especially as he knew that Harry had gone fishing alone; and as minute after minute dragged slowly along, the old man's anxiety increased, and when the dusk of evening began to creep down the hill-sides he got so troubled that he could stay in the house no longer, but rushed across the meadows to Adam's cottage to know if he had seen or heard anything of the boy.

Of course Adam had seen nothing of him, but he would go up into the village and make inquiries

there. After awhile he returned with the news that no one had seen him or heard anything of him for the afternoon.

Poor old Enoch grew pale at these tidings, and started off into the village himself to consult with his neighbours as to what should be done. Half an hour later Cwmdare was in a state of great excitement, and a dozen men, headed by Enoch and Adam, started off for the mountain tarn in search of the poor lost lad, while Enoch's cottage was left unprotected to take care of itself.

A few minutes later Owen Thorne and his companion entered "The Cottage" unnoticed and without difficulty. One hour later they left the house and closed the door softly behind them. Passing down through the garden they crossed the brook by the narrow plank, and turned suddenly to the right, following the winding of the stream down the valley; by-and-by they emerged into the high road, and went swiftly forward in the direction of the "Traveller's Rest."

They had left the village nearly two miles behind them before either of them spoke. Then Owen Thorne said to his companion—

"Not a bad night's work this, eh, Luke?"

"Splendid," grunted his companion. "If I'd known the old fool was in the habit of keeping so much in the house I'd have put my finger into it before."

"He's been just getting in his rents, I expect, and hasn't had time to bank it," said Owen Thorne.

"And we've saved him the trouble now, so he ought to be thankful," said his companion.

"Ay, just so. But we must be clear out of this neighbourhood before morning, or we shall find it a trifle warm, I guess; so let us hurry on."

The day was breaking when Enoch and his neighbours returned, sad and disheartened, to Cwmdare.

"Thee needn't come in," Enoch said to Adam, when they reached his garden gate. "I want to be alone a bit; I can bear it best alone."

Locking the door behind him, he went at once to his own room; but one glance at the disarranged furniture was sufficient to show him what had happened, and for a moment a strange look came over the old man's face, as if he had been smitten by sudden pain. Then he staggered towards the cabinet.

"Thank God! they've left the picture," he muttered, as his eye fell on the morocco case. Then his eye fell on a slip of paper. He caught it up eagerly, and hastily scanned the few words it contained. There were but five words in all, but in a moment they changed all the old man's sorrow into indignation.

When night came on he left the cottage and sought his cave once more, and in the diligent search that was made for Harry for many days after, Enoch took no part ; he told no one of the robbery that had been committed, nor would he hold any conversation about the missing boy. If he knew anything more than the neighbours knew, he kept it to himself. The old cynical spirit took possession of him again, and Adam declared that he was a thousand times worse than ever he was before.





HARRY'S RETURN TO CONSCIOUSNESS.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SAD AWAKENING.

"O little feet ! that such long years
Must wander on through hope and fears,
Must ache and bleed beneath your load ;
I, nearer to the wayside inn
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
I am weary, thinking of your road !"

LONGFELLOW.

SI X weeks later Harry opened his eyes one still, drowsy afternoon, and looked wearily around him. For nearly a month he had lain unconscious, tossing in the delirium of brain fever. What he had

passed through during the fortnight that preceded the day when consciousness mercifully left him, no one knew but himself, or could ever know. His bodily sufferings—and they were great enough—were nothing compared to his mental distress. His father told him what they had done, and how they had done it in such a way, that suspicion would instantly rest upon him.

"Will Mr. Walder believe that I have robbed him?" said Harry, looking with brimming eyes into his father's face.

"Most certainly he will."

"Then I must go back and tell him."

"And leave your father?" was the sneering reply.

"But I will come back to you."

"And get tracked by the police?"

"Then let me write to him," said Harry.

"And rob your father of his character, and reveal his whereabouts. You are certainly very generous!"

"But," wailed Harry, "he has been so kind to me; and I promised to pay him back."

"And you have done it," sneered his father; "only in another way."

Poor Harry! he saw that it was of no use trying to argue with his besotted father, so he resolved to bear the stigma in silence till time

should give him an opportunity of clearing his name and showing his gratitude to the old man that had befriended him. And in the meanwhile he would try to carry out his mother's dying injunction, and be kind to this wicked man, and try to help him to a better life. It was a strange legacy his mother had left him—the care of a drunken father. Alas! drunkenness was not his worst crime, though it was the parent of all the others.

But the burden was greater than Harry could bear, and beneath the load he staggered and fell, and it seemed for a long time as if he would die; and yet, in spite of neglect, he lived till the fever had burnt itself out, and consciousness came back once more.

It was a still, drowsy afternoon, as we before stated, when Harry opened his eyes, and looked wearily around the dreary room—a hundred times more dreary than the little room in Primrose Square—more dreary even than the room at the “Traveller’s Rest.” He did not know where he was; he could not remember ever being in the room before, and he was too weary to trouble himself as to how he got there; so he lay watching a little patch of light that flickered on the opposite wall, and moved slowly across it, as the afternoon waned, till the light went out, and the dusk of evening came gradually on.

It did not seem to trouble Harry that he was alone ; he was too weak and weary to trouble about anything. The only thing he seemed conscious of was a sense of weariness, and a desire to lie still and rest. To attempt to move, or to try to think, would be pain ; he felt that somehow, so he lay perfectly still and made no effort of any kind. Whether the afternoon was long or short he did not know ; and why the little patch of light disappeared at length from the opposite wall was a question he did not try to answer.

At length a light footstep startled him, though not sufficiently to cause him to turn his head—that would be too much trouble ; so he waited while the footstep drew nearer and nearer where he lay ; then he became conscious that something was scrambling on to the bed, and the next moment a little face bent over him, and two bright eyes were looking down into his.

It was a pleasant little face ; he felt that, and one that he had never seen before ; but who the intruder might be, or why he had come, were questions that did not trouble him.

“ So you’re awake, are you ? ” was the first question that Harry heard ; and he winked in reply—that way of replying cost the least effort.

“ You’ve ‘ad a mighty long sleep,” said the little figure after a pause ; “ an’ some bad dreams too, I’m thinkin’.”

"Have I?" said Harry wearily, and making a tremendous effort to get the words out.

"Well, I guess so," was the reply. "I've a-been in to look at yer ev'ry day this last fortnight, an' this are the fust time I've catched yer awake."

"I've been ill, I think," said Harry.

"I rather think yer 'ave," was the reply. And then there was a pause, during which Harry made an effort to think.

"Where's uncle Enoch?" he said at length.

"Uncle, eh?" said the little figure that still kept looking at him; "chap said as 'ow he wur yer father."

Then, in a moment, the truth flashed across Harry's mind. "Oh, yes," he answered slowly, "I remember now. But where is my father?"

"On the spree, I specks. He's been on that game ever since he comed here. He seems to ave a sight of brass."

"And who are you?" said Harry at length.

"I'm Mike," was the reply.

"Mike what?" said Harry.

"Mike What!" echoed the boy; "no, I'm not Mike What. I'm Mike; nothin' more."

"Where's your father?" said Harry, beginning at length to feel interested in this strange little child.

"Never 'ad none," was the reply.

" Who do you live with, then ? "

" My mother—in the room above," said Mike, with a toss of his head.

" What do you do ? " said Harry, after another pause.

" Moas things," laughed the boy. " Sometimes I cribs ; sometimes I turns cart wheels 'long the side o' the 'busses ; sometimes I carries gent's bags ; sometimes I sells fusees ; if I can get a few coppers to buy stock ; but I'm not pertickler to a shade."

" And what does your mother do ? "

" Oh, anything—that's when she's sober. Sometimes she goes out wi' kindlin' ; sometimes wi' sand-bags ; sometimes wi' grate-papers ; sometimes wi' cresses ; sometimes wi' one thing, sometimes wi' another—anything as 'appens to be in season."

" Why doesn't she mend your clothes ? " said Harry ; " they're very much torn."

" Oh lor ! " laughed the boy. " Mother mend my cloas ! That are a stunner ! I'd like to see her ! I does all my own mendin'. These 'ere togs are rather wus for wear, but I likes plenty of holes in summer. I'll 'ave to fish up some new uns 'gainst winter comes."

Then Harry closed his eyes, for the effort he had made to ask so many questions had quite exhausted him.

"I'll go an' tell Mrs. Tubbs you's awake," said Mike, slipping off the bed.

"Who is Mrs. Tubbs?" said Harry, without opening his eyes.

"Lan'lady," was the reply; "lives on fust floor an' 'tends to the lot." And the next moment Mike was gone.

Soon after, a hard-featured and untidy-looking old woman came into the room, and, without speaking to Harry, raised his head and gave him some gruel to drink out of a teapot; then she turned him over on his side and told him to go to sleep, and the next minute left the room.

Harry was not long in following the old woman's injunction, and so soundly did he sleep that he did not hear his father's unsteady step as he reeled into the room about midnight, nor the muttered curses that were heaped upon his head. By morning Owen Thorne was sober, and seeing that Harry was awake and conscious, he said,—

"Now, youngster, make haste and get well, for you'll have to work for your living while you are with me: and remember that for the last month you've been a dead loss." And with a frightful oath on his lips, he left the room.

Harry did not cry, or give himself up to repining; but his thoughts went wandering away back to the dear old life he lived at Cwmdare, and during the hours of that forenoon he lived it

all over again. He saw Ethel's happy face and deep brown eyes ; he heard the music of Douglas's voice, and listened to his pealing laughter ; he watched again the genial smile play over Enoch's weather-beaten face, and even caught the sounds of Adam's soliloquy as he wandered slowly across the meadows ; he heard again the sighing of the wind in the poplars, and the gurgle of the brook as it rippled down outside the garden hedge ; he saw the sunlight flash on the forest trees, and the water's sparkle that came leaping down from the mountain tarn. And when the thought came that all this was over for ever, he put it aside, and resolved that he would be happy while he could.

About a week later he was dressed for the first time. It was fortunate there was no glass in the room, or he would have been astonished at his emaciated appearance. He could scarcely believe, however, that they were his own clothes that he had put on. It seemed to him that they must have been made for some one double his size, so wasted had he become.

That evening his father came home sober, and sat for a long time in a crazy old rocking-chair—which, however, was the best piece of furniture the room contained—moody and silent. At length he looked at Harry, who was sitting on a low stool on the other side of the empty fireplace, and said,—

"Well, boy, are you willing to remain with your father?"

"Yes," said Harry. "It was mammy's wish, and besides, I suppose you have a right to me."

"And you'll not try to run away?"

"No, I'll not run away, though I was very happy with Enoch."

Then his father swore at him, remarking that he might have stayed had he not been a fool.

"I meant to have worked old Enoch through you," he remarked, a little later. "However, he's been pretty well fleeced; and now, boy, I'll work you for your folly."

"What must I do?" said Harry.

"Sing!" snarled his father; "you have a very decent voice. I had as good once, but——" And he swore again.

"Where must I sing, father?" And the boy looked timidly up into his father's cruel and besotted face, and waited patiently for an answer.

"In the streets, until I can get a better place for you," snarled his father at length. "And mind, no grumbling, or——" He did not finish the sentence, however, but he looked it.

A week later, Harry went forth into the streets for the first time to sing for his bread. He was in a strange town where no one knew him, so he thought it did not matter. He felt somehow

that he ought to obey his father so long as he was not requested to do anything positively sinful. He never thought much about the future, nor in what way he should go to work to try to lead his father to a better life. He only felt that, for his dead mother's sake, he must cling to this drunken man, be kind to him, and lead him away from temptation as much as possible. He thought his mother up in heaven would be pleased if she could see him trying to help his father to keep a home over their heads, though it was of the poorest description. Perhaps she would hear him sing, and know that it was for her sake, and for his father's, that he sang. So he went forth into the streets that August afternoon with flushed cheek and trembling step, and stopping at a street corner, and resting against a pillar-post, he warbled forth, in rich clear notes, the words—

" Home to our mountains let us return, love;
There, in thy young days, peace had its reign ;
There, shall thy sweet song fall on my slumbers ;
There, shall thy lute make me joyous again.

" Rest thee, my mother ; kneeling beside thee,
I will pour forth my troubadour lay.
Sing, and wake now thy sweet lute's soft numbers ;
Lull me to rest, charm my sorrows away."

And while he sang on, people paused to listen, till a little crowd had gathered round him, for rarely was so sweet a voice to be heard singing

in the streets, and rarely a vagrant singer that had so sweet a face. Harry scarcely noticed the people that gathered around him, nor the tears that started in many an eye ; for the boy's heart was in the song he sang, and it went to the hearts of those who listened. Yet there was a far-away look in his eyes that the listeners could not fail to notice ; for his thoughts were home among the mountains of dear old Wales, and his heart was there also.

When the song was ended, he seemed startled to find himself the centre of a little crowd, and to forget for a moment why he had come forth to sing ; but a few persons in the little gathering reminded him, by throwing down some coppers at his feet. Harry blushed as he picked them up and bowed his thanks in such a way as to convince his benefactors that this little singer of the streets was no common child.

As time wore on he went forth with less diffidence, though his face was always sad now ; and there was a plaintiveness in his tones that went right home to people's hearts. If he was not resigned to his lot it was not for want of trying, and yet every day his loss seemed greater and harder to bear. His father got no better, and the greater part of his earnings he knew went in drink ; and so, in time, he almost lost heart and hope, and wondered if there would be any

rest for him but in the grave. Yet he never complained, though oftentimes he was pinched for bread; and as the cold weather came on he had not clothes enough to keep him warm. Still, he never thought of forsaking this drunken man, or hesitated to go forth, in rain or shine, to try and earn for him and for himself a crust of bread. For the money stolen from Enoch Walder was soon squandered—at least Owen's share of it was. Luke, after that night, went his own way in life, and the two never met again on earth.

It was a weary, hopeless life that Harry led. The only comfort he had was little Mike. He came into Harry's room nearly every evening, and though he was often hungry and cold, he was never downhearted; he had never known anything but cuffs and kicks all his life, and never hoped for anything better.

He was very ignorant, so Harry set to work to teach him, and found comfort in trying to help this little neglected waif into a better life. Mike was a very long time before he could make out how it could be wicked to steal or to tell lies, and when, at length, he could understand it in some degree, he would not promise to give up what had often proved to him the easiest way of getting a living.

“No, Thorney,” he said, addressing Harry,

"you mustn't take this little chap to be so jolly green."

Still Harry did not despair, though he had begun to despair respecting his father. The little boy seemed naturally kind and good; but his father seemed to have no spark of goodness left. There was hope for the twig; but what of the blasted tree?

Harry tried other ways of earning his living, but with very indifferent success. There was no one to whom he could apply for a character, and people refused to employ him without; and so at every turn he was driven back upon the streets, till he got weary of trying.

There were times when his father seemed to be very penitent, and professed unbounded affection; but he was always in drink at such times, and Harry knew that his protestations were a mockery, though he never attempted to contradict him.

He stoutly refused, however, after a while, to hand over to his father his earnings, but on his way home he would spend the few pence he had gathered in the common necessaries of life, or pay to Mrs. Tubbs, when it was due, the weekly rent.

So time wore on. Summer and autumn passed away, and winter came on apace. The streets were wet and cheerless, and the wind bitterly cold. Night after night Harry wrapped himself in the

scanty clothing of his wretched bed, and cried himself to sleep. His courage was fast failing him before hunger and cold, and life got to be such a burden at last that he longed and prayed to die.





HARRY THORNE AND MIFE.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW HARRY SPENT HIS CHRISTMAS.

"Chime on, chime on, ye merry Christmas bells,
For well we love your dear, familiar sound;
Voices long silent in your music dwells,
Loved forms long vanished seem to cluster round,
Their fond, true eyes reflecting heaven's own light;
They come, dear whispering spirits robed in white!"

FANNY FORRESTER.



T wanted but a few days to Christmas, and everybody seemed to be getting ready to enjoy themselves, and to welcome the day with mirth and gladness. The shop windows in Birmingham, as in

other places, were a perfect study, and crowds of people sauntered through the streets after night-fall, seemingly for no other purpose than to look at the decorations, and the goodly display of Christmas cheer.

Harry had been out all the day in the biting cold, trying to earn an honest penny, but he had met with very indifferent success. People seemed in no mood to listen to his songs, and he had no heart to sing. While the thought of the coming Christmas made most people joyful, it made him sad. It brought back to him memories of happy hours that had passed away for ever ; and while he thought of the happy Christmas he had spent at Cwmdare, the tears rolled down his face and would not be stayed. He had been away six months now, and his heart was hungering for a sight of the dear faces there, and he longed to go back and look at them all once more. But, alas ! he dared not. He had promised his father that he would not go away. But that was not all. From what his father had told him, he had no doubt that he was looked upon there as a thief who had requited the old man's kindness by robbing his house ; and how hateful such conduct must seem to Enoch, and to Douglas, and to Ethel, and to all the people in the village. And any attempt to clear his name would but reveal the character of his father, and

the people would know if the boy was not a thief the father was. So, whatever might come to him, he would never go back to Cwmdare again; never again look in Enoch's face, never more be the friend of Douglas, and never feel the soft hand of Ethel within his own.

He was sitting shivering over an almost empty grate as these sad thoughts were passing through his mind. Outside the wind moaned and wailed and shrieked up the narrow street, drifting the snow in heaps, and rattling the badly-fitting window as if it meant to break every pane of glass that was not already broken.

Poor little Mike had been sent out by his mother to steal something that she could pawn for gin, and the poor little waif had gone forth into the biting cold with bare feet and tattered clothes, forgetful of nearly everything but his mother's threat that if he returned empty-handed, "she would not leave a sound bone in his skin."

Where his father was he could not tell, but he had no doubt that he was at some public-house in the neighbourhood, or else in one of the gambling saloons that abounded on every hand. Somehow he always found money to get drink with, and expected Harry to find him bread. His temper during the last few weeks had been as biting as the cold. He had expected that

Harry's voice was going to prove a fortune to him, and was greatly disappointed that it had not, and so Harry rarely got anything from him but a snarl.

At length the clocks began to strike the hour of eleven, and Harry rose from his chair and knelt down by the side of his little bed in a corner of the room to say his nightly prayer. He was just about to rise from his knees when his father entered, and for a moment regarded him in silence.

"What art thou kneeling there for?" he said at last.

"I have been praying, father," said Harry, meekly; "praying for you and for myself, as dear mammy taught me." Then, bursting into tears, he cried out, "Oh, my father, if you would only give up the drink and try to be good, I think we might be happy yet."

For a wonder, Owen Thorne did not curse his boy or even snarl; perhaps he thought of days long, long ago, when he was a boy, and knelt by his father's side each evening while God was thanked for the mercies of the day. And Harry looked up timidly, and saw a look in his father's eyes that told that his thoughts were far away.

He spoke at last.

"Boy," he said, "I have good news for you. I have got you an engagement, which I think

will be a permanent one, if you don't make a fool of yourself."

"What is it?" said Harry.

"To sing at the Eagle Music Hall," was the reply.

"Oh, I had hoped," said Harry, "that it was something for my hands to do."

"Now don't be a fool," snarled his father; "you're to make your *début* on Christmas Eve, so I'll put you through a few practices tomorrow."

Harry said no more, but he was not at all elated at the thought of singing at a music-hall. True, he did not know what such places were like, yet somehow he had got the impression that they were not very nice.

Christmas Eve came all too soon to Harry, for he dreaded the ordeal that he was to go through. His father tried hard to force him to drink a glass of rum before he started out, but in this matter he was firm as a rock.

"No," he said, "I will never taste that which has blighted your life, mammy's life, and mine also."

His father swore at him roundly, sneered at him, and even threatened to horsewhip him, but Harry was not to be moved.

In the "Green-room," as it was called, behind the stage, Harry found, when he entered with his

father, about a dozen men and women, including the proprietor, who had heard Harry singing in the streets, and had taken a fancy to him in consequence. Harry shrank from the besotted-looking men and brazen-faced women, and wished himself far enough away from the place; but there was no help for it, and he had to make the best of the situation.

He had a peep at the hall before he went on the stage, and was surprised to find that it was such a large place, with a gallery running all round it, and a bar at the opposite end, where, to all appearance, a brisk trade in spirits was being done. His heart almost failed him at sight of the company that had assembled, for he felt somehow that they were not good people, and the clink of glasses, and muttered oaths and curses that fell on his ears, confirmed his impression.

At length his turn came—he was announced on the programme as “Thorney Wild, the Welsh Wonder.” And with trembling steps, and face pale as a corpse, he walked out on the stage towards the glaring footlights.

For a moment all the place seemed to swim around him, and he thought he would have fallen, but a muttered oath from his father, who sat near him behind one of the screens, made him feel indignant, and brought back all his courage, and

throwing his head back, and looking fearlessly around him, he waited for a moment. Then clear and sweet rang out the words—

“The dearest spot on earth to me
Is home, sweet home;
The fairyland I long to see
Is home, sweet home.”

Before Harry had got through the first line, every voice in the building but his was hushed. The audience fairly held its breath to listen, and you might have heard a pin fall when he paused to take his breath. Besotted men and women paused in the very act of raising the glass to their lips, and oaths died on men’s tongues and were never completed. Harry forgot the audience in the sentiment of the song, and there came up before his vision instead a peaceful cottage among the hills with trelliswork around the door, and smiling meadows stretching away beyond the garden where two boys and a girl ran races, and two old men watched them with happy smiles lighting up their weather-beaten faces.

When the song ended the applause was tumultuous. It was not the kind of singing nor the kind of song that they had been in the habit of listening to at the “Eagle.”

Again and again was the applause repeated, and cries of “Encore!” were heard above the rattle of mugs and glasses and the stamping of

feet. Harry looked bewildered, and knew not what to do, but was made to understand at length that he was to sing again.

So once more he walked out towards the foot-lights, and was greeted with vociferous cheers. Then there fell an awkward silence of several moments, for Harry knew not what to sing. He seemed, too, to forget for a moment where he was, and all unconsciously it seemed to him, he commenced to sing in low plaintive notes, that stole away out over the audience like the wail of a broken heart—

“O Paradise, O Paradise,
The world is growing old;
Who would not be at rest and free
Where love is never cold? ”

For a moment, astonishment sat on every face. Then eyes unused to weeping filled with tears, and brazen-faced young women hid their faces in their hands and wept. But all unheeding, Harry sang on, for in imagination he was far away from the gaudy music-hall in the land of which he sung—

“O Paradise, O Paradise,
‘Tis weary waiting here——”

Then suddenly a curtain fell before him, and he felt himself rudely dragged off the stage.

What happened after that he could never distinctly remember, for his father had pounced upon him with the suddenness of an infuriated

lion, and with his clenched fist struck him full in the face, felling him to the earth. He felt a sharp sudden pain as his head struck a corner of the fender, and then all was a blank.

The next thing he remembered was awaking to the sound of Christmas bells, clanging out their wild harmonies and discords upon the wintry air. He wondered for a moment what the sounds meant, and why he had a heavy bandage tied tightly round his head. Then the recollection of the previous evening came back with all its vividness and horror, and his cheeks flushed crimson at the thought of the treatment he had received.

During all that day he lay in bed, scarcely once moving his head, for it pained him less when he lay perfectly still. Outside, the snow fell unceasingly, and the wind wailed all the day long; but he did not heed it much, his thoughts were back again in the happy past, and he pictured Douglas and Ethel enjoying themselves in the warm, pleasant rooms of the "Grange," and wondered if they ever gave a thought to him. And what of Enoch? he wondered. Was he sitting alone to-day, listening sadly to the wind wailing in the trees, and thinking hard thoughts about men's baseness and ingratitude? Oh, how he longed to go back and tell him that he was not ungrateful—to tell Douglas and Ethel that he was

not a thief. And why not? Was he justified any longer in submitting to such cruel treatment as he had received, or in trying to screen this besotted man from the clutches of the law.

But the thought was only momentary. He felt a moment later that he dared not do it. Whatever this man might be, he was "his father," and he could not leave him; he must cling to him, pray for him, bear with him, through cruelty, scorn, and neglect; and who could tell the power of kindness? it might win him to better ways in time, if he would only be patient and persevere.

Just as it began to grow dusk little Mike came in, and clambered upon the bed, and putting his face close to Harry's, commenced to cry.

"What is the matter, Mike?" said Harry, for it was something new to see the little fellow downhearted.

"Mother's beat me so," he sobbed, "and tied me to the bed. I's only just got loose, and I's had nothin' to eat since yesterday."

"Poor little Mike!" said Harry, soothingly, forgetting his own trouble in the sorrow of this little child. "But never mind, I've got two shillings left. Could you go out and get some bun-loaf and cocoa, and a couple of oranges, for it's Christmas day, you know, and ask Mrs. Tubbs to bring us a big jug full of cocoa—hot!"

"Oh, ay!" said Mike, slipping off the bed in a

trice; and grasping the florin Harry gave him, he was out of the room and out of the house in a twinkling. And not long after, Mrs. Tubbs came up with the cocoa, and Mike with the bun-loaf.

"Now," said Harry, when Mrs. Tubbs had gone, "put some coal on the fire, Mike, we'll be warm to-night if we are cold to-morrow. There, that will do, now we'll enjoy our Christmas." And the remainder of that long evening the boys spent together, Harry entertaining his little friend with the old, old story of the angels, and the shepherds, and the King that was born in Bethlehem of Judea. And Mike listened with wondering eyes and bated breath, for he had never heard the story before. And when he lay down in his little corner that night, it was to dream of the loving King who "for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich."

It was near midnight when Owen Thorne staggered home, but Harry was fast asleep and did not hear him. The next day his father commanded him to go to the "Eagle," and beg pardon of the proprietor, and ask to be given another chance. But Harry stoutly refused to obey, and neither promises nor threats could move him from his purpose.

But it would have availed nothing if he had

gone. He had offended beyond forgiveness—had taken advantage of his permission to sing his own songs, and had sung what the proprietor declared “was only fit for a Methody prayer meeting.” “I’d have all the folks turning religious if that boy were here for a month,” he said to Harry’s father. “No, sir, he shall never come here again!”

Owen Thorne was terribly indignant, and vowed vengeance on the boy; yet he never struck Harry after that night in the “green-room.” There was something in the lad’s fearless eye that cowed him, something in his patient kindness that touched his seared and withered heart, something in his manly independence that reminded him of possibilities that once were his, and something too in the curl of his lip that Owen Thorne felt meant mischief to him if he were not careful.

Before the year ended Harry had succeeded in getting a situation in a grocery store as errand-boy or out-porter. He was very thankful for this, for his earnings were now regular, and sure. He could also have all his evenings to himself, and would be better able in consequence to look after his father, and instruct little Mike in those things that the little fellow was anxious to know all about.

So time wore on. The dreary winter days gave place to budding spring, and spring lengthened

into summer. And autumn came on again, and the evenings grew chill once more, and at length the frosty nights and keen north winds told that even autumn was past, and that winter was king again.

Through all these months Harry kept his situation, and rose in the estimation of his employers. But they never knew the struggle the boy had, nor how "the burden laid upon him" seemed sometimes greater than he could bear. But he toiled bravely on, seeking day by day strength from God, and never seeking in vain. The discipline of those months was very painful, and yet it did him good. The care of a father who was worse than helpless, and the responsibility of keeping a home for both, developed all the latent energy of his nature, and made him self-reliant. He felt himself a man in experience, though only a boy in years, and able of himself to battle with the world whatever might happen in the future.

But changes were coming, and difficulties loomed in the distance, that would tax his powers to the utmost. The weary struggle was not to end yet, nor the burden to be lifted from his heart, and it was well for him in those days that he remembered that when the worst came to the worst, he had still a friend in heaven.



HARRY'S VISIT TO MIKE.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW MIKE STARTED AFRESH WITH THE NEW YEAR.

"I think that a little bird will sing
Over a grassy mound next spring,
Where something that once was *me* ye'll leave
In the level sunshine, morn and eve:
But I shall be gone, past night, past day,
Over the hills and far away." —CRAIK.

MIKE'S hurt, I fear," said Mrs. Tubbs, coming into Harry's room one evening with his dry toast and a jug of warm water, for tea was a luxury that he could not afford except on special occasions.

"Hurt!" said Harry, looking up with a questioning expression; "in what way?"

"Well, he says a wheel went over him, but I don't think that can be so, for he walked home by himself, and managed to pull himself upstairs without anybody helping him."

"Is he up in his own room?" said Harry.

"Ay, he's crept into bed, and he looks white and out of sorts, and he wouldn't touch the toast that I took him, so the little chap must be wrong somehow."

"I hope it is nothing serious," said Harry, looking troubled, for he had got to love the bright-eyed little fellow that had kept him company through so many dreary evenings.

As soon as he had finished his simple meal, he went at once up into the room occupied by Mike and his mother. It was a dismal room. Harry felt that the room occupied by himself and father was almost a palace compared to it. Not a spark of fire glimmered in the rusty grate, and a tallow candle stuck in the neck of a bottle gave a very uncertain light, just sufficient to reveal the dinginess and squalor of the room. In one corner on a heap of straw, hay, and shavings, that the poor little fellow had got together himself, lay Mike, pale and silent.

"What's the matter, Mike?" said Harry, bend-

ing over him tenderly, and laying one hand upon his forehead.

“Got squeezed a bit under the wheel of a fly,” said Mike, trying vainly to steady his voice, and making an equally poor attempt to smile.

“Did the wheel go right over you?” questioned Harry.

“Ay, right here,” said Mike, placing his hand on his stomach.

“And did it hurt you very much?”

“No, not very. If I lie still I scarce feel it; if I moves though, it makes me sing out.”

Then there was silence for several minutes. At length Mike spoke again. “Goin’ out to-night, Thorney?” he said.

“No,” said Harry, “I’m going to stay in to-night.”

“P’r’aps you won’t mind staying ’ere a bit with me then,” said the little fellow. “It’s a trifle lonesome by oneself, an’ I don’t know when mother’ll be home, or what sort of temper she’ll be in when she do come.”

“I’ll stay with you till my father comes,” said Harry, “unless your mother happens to come home first.”

“That’s good of you, Thorney,” said Mike; “an’ look ’ere, would yer mind tellin’ me that story again about the angels and the chaps that kep’ the sheep?”

And Mike closed his eyes to listen, while Harry repeated to him nearly all he could remember of the wonderful story of the Gospel, beginning with the shepherds and ending with Calvary.

"I never could make out," said Mike, after a pause, "sin' you told me the story more'n a year agone now, what they wanted to kill the Saviour for."

"It's very strange," said Harry, "but they could not have crucified Him unless He had permitted them to do so."

"Ay, that's curus too; why did He let 'em, I wonder?"

"I cannot explain it properly," said Harry, "but my mammy used to tell me how He suffered and died, that we might not suffer and die in the other world—that is, the world we shall go to when we die, you know."

"Oh, ay," said Mike, slowly.

"Mammy used to say," continued Harry, "that by dying He paid our debt, and that all who trust in Him will go to heaven when they die, and know no more pain, or poverty, or sorrow any more, but be happy for ever and ever."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Mike, sententiously, "then I'm just goin' to trust in Him right off."

Several hours later Mike's mother returned, but she did not notice her little patient child that lay with wide open eyes, unable to sleep for pain.

And in the morning when she got up, she seemed surprised to find him still in bed, for Mike was always an early riser.

"Come, get up, you young vagrant," she said, with an oath, "what d'ye mean by skulkin' in this way?"

"I can't git up, mother," he said, "I's got hurt, wheel went over me yesterday."

"Hurt! gammon!" she snarled. "You don't come the old soger over me; so stir your stumps this minute."

"I wish I could," he said, the tears gathering in his eyes.

Instantly she caught him by the hair of his head and lifted him up, but he shrieked so, and turned so ghastly pale, that she dropped him as if he had stung her. "Wait, then," she snarled, "until hunger makes you get up," and she went out and left him alone.

About noon Harry came home to have a peep at his little friend. He found him lying in the same position as on the previous evening. Mrs. Tubbs told Harry that she had been up during the forenoon "with a bit of toast and a cup of tea," but he had turned from it with loathing. He looked very haggard and white Harry thought, and his breathing seemed laboured and painful, but he did not complain.

"I reckon I's a bit better," he said in answer

to Harry's inquiry. "It don't hurt quite so much as it did."

"Don't you think then you could take a little of something to eat?" said Harry.

"I did try a bit just now, but it comed up again, and hurt me awful."

"Poor little fellow!" said Harry, soothingly.

"I'd be all right, I reckon," said Mike, with a wan smile, "if I wur a bit warmer; I've been terrible cold all day."

"I'll get you my blanket," said Harry. "Father has been better lately; has brought home a bit of money once or twice to help to keep house, and last week he brought home two blankets, but you can have mine, Mike, till you get better." And Harry ran down to his room, and a minute later returned with the blanket, and spread it carefully over the little invalid, gently tucking it in at the sides.

"Oh, that's glorious," said Mike, "I shall be better d'rectly, now. You are good, Thorney."

"Don't say anything about it," said Harry, "I'll come up and see you again this evening. I hope you will soon be better."

"Oh, I'll be right as ninepence by to-morrow, you see if I ain't," and the next moment he was once more alone.

About six o'clock his mother returned. Mike knew by her unsteady step the state she was in,

but he was too weary to trouble about it. For a long time she tried unsuccessfully to get a light. At length, however, she succeeded, and when the flickering rays of the candle fell upon the blanket, her cold eyes glittered.

"Ain't you got up yet, you lazy vagabond?" she snarled. "Come, look alive, or you'll wish you had," and she caught him roughly by the shoulder.

"Oh, don't, mother, don't," he wailed, "it's awful if I move."

"Don't believe a word of it," she said; "however, this blanket will do splendid. I wanted something to see the old year out with, and drink to the health of the new;" and she pulled the blanket off the suffering child, and proceeded with unsteady hands to fold it up.

"Oh, don't, mother, don't!" said Mike, turning towards her his great wistful eyes. "It's Thorney's blanket, an' I'm so very cold."

"Hold yer noise, you brat!" she said, giving him, at the same time, a vicious kick, which made him hold his breath for several seconds.

"Oh, what will Thorney say?" he sobbed at length.

"Who cares?" was the sullen answer. "Now go to sleep with yer, and see that you're ready to begin the new year to-morrow in right style."

Mike made no reply to this, and not long after,

his mother blew out the light and staggered out of the room, taking the blanket with her.

"Thorney 'll come again," he mused, as he lay staring into the darkness. "I wonder what he'll say. But, never mind, I'll buy him another when I gets well enough; but, somehow I feel precious queer. I wonder now if I'm goin' to the nice place Thorney talks about, cause I'd be mighty glad to go;" and he tried to pull the scanty covering of the bed a little more closely around him.

The evening seemed very long to the little fellow as he lay there hour after hour, fighting pain, and staring with glassy eyes into the darkness. But at length, he heard a welcome step on the stairs, and a voice out of the darkness called—

"Are you there, Mike?"

"Ay," he answered feebly, trying to smile, "I wish I wer'n't."

"Have you no light? But wait a minute, and I'll fetch a candle."

"Hullo," said Harry, when he returned, "where's the blanket?"

"Mother's took it," said Mike, "but I'll buy yer another, Thorney, when I gets better, so don't be down about it."

"Poor little Mike!" said Harry, tenderly, "how could she do it?" Then, after a pause, "And are you better to-night?"

"Ay, Thorney, I'm all afloat, I seem to be sailin' on as if I were a-top of a cloud, an' it's 'mazin' nice."

"Are you in no pain, Mike?"

"No; pain's all gone, an' nearly all the cold, I reckon I'm gettin' near."

"What do you mean?" said Harry, in a tone of alarm.

"Oh, never you fear, Thorney, I'm all right. I'll be better in no time now; but sing us a bit about the country where there ain't no sorrow, and sich like, will yer?"

"Oh, yes," said Harry, "if you wish it;" and he commenced to sing, in his clear, sweet voice--

"There's a beautiful land where the rains never beat,
And the east winds never blow:
Where they feel not the glow of the summer heat,
Nor the chill of the winter's snow."

"Ay, that's fine," said Mike, at length. "I'm gittin' on nicely."

"Getting on?" said Harry, "I don't understand you."

"Don't yer, Thorney?" and Mike turned his glassy eyes towards him, "well, I reckon I'm goin' wi' the Saviour; I b'lieve He's come for me. Don't try to hold me, Thorney. There, did you hear Him callin'?"

"What do you mean?" said Harry, growing pale with fear.

"All yer told me last night; I've jist trusted Him right off, an' it's all true, I reckon. Now sing us a bit more 'bout Paradise."

And softly as a mother sings her child to sleep, Harry sang to the dying boy—

"O Paradise, O Paradise,
Who doth not crave for rest?
Who would not seek the happy land
Where they that loved are blest?
Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight."

And slowly on to the end Harry sang, unheeding of the pallor that was slowly creeping over the face of his little friend.

Mike did not speak when the song was ended, but lay with his glassy eyes fixed upon the ceiling, as if he saw far beyond it. Harry did not disturb him, but knelt down by his side and watched eagerly every change that passed over his face. It was near midnight now. Swiftly the old year was drawing to its close, and the tide of Mike's little life had nearly ebbed out for ever.

At length a great clock from a church steeple near began to toll out the solemn hour. At the first clang of the bell Mike started, and whispered, "There it is;" and bending on Harry a look

of recognition, a happy smile stole over his pale, pinched face and lingered there. A moment later the bells began to chime out all over the town a merry peal, to welcome in the new year, but Mike did not heed them. He was far away beyond the noise and strife of earth ; in the land where there is no pain, nor tears, nor death. His soul had gone out with the stroke of midnight, and he commenced the new year in heaven.

We will pass over the painful details of the inquest and funeral, and the terror of the brutal mother when it was hinted to her that she might be convicted on a charge of manslaughter. But she got off with nothing worse than a severe censure, and celebrated her escape by a drunken carousal with several of her most intimate friends.

On the following Sunday morning Harry went to a chapel that he frequently attended, and got into his usual seat under the gallery stairs. His heart, however, was too sad to allow him to pay much attention to the service, until the minister, in the course of his sermon, began to illustrate the love of God by a mother's love for her child, and in eloquent and touching language he went on to tell, how a mother's love would live through neglect, and insult, and cruelty. How it would survive pain, and privation, and poverty. How unkindness would not crush it out, nor long years

of neglect destroy it. But how it would live on through every change of scene and circumstance; and only deepen and intensify with the flight of years. "Nothing can destroy it," said the minister, "it will live as long as the brain can think, as long as the human heart can feel."

Harry waited that morning till the minister came back through the aisle, though he had never done so before. Mr. Walters had noticed the boy several times before, and was glad to have the opportunity of speaking to him.

"Good morning, my lad," he said, kindly placing his hand on Harry's brown curls. "I am very pleased to see you here."

"Thank you," said Harry, "but if you please, sir, there is one thing that will destroy a mother's love."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Walters, regarding the boy curiously, whose fine intellectual face, did not at all comport with his poor, even shabby clothes, "and what is that?"

"Drink, sir."

"Ah!" and Mr. Walters started as if something had stung him, then remarked, kindly, "And so you have found out that, have you, my boy?"

"Yes, sir; and it can't be a good thing if it will do that, can it, sir?"

"Well—per—haps—not," said the minister,

evasively ; and Harry, feeling that perhaps he had been rude in daring to address him, hurried away with a hasty good morning.

It was a simple question that Harry had asked, but it came back to Mr. Walters again and again. He had taken considerable pains with that part of his sermon, and he had given it with great effect. He saw that it had taken with the congregation. The trembling lip, and the unbidden tear that had been hastily brushed away, told that it had touched the heart of many a mother in the congregation, and many a father too. He had gone over that part of his sermon again and again in his study, for he was not one to make rash statements in the pulpit.

" No, he said," after thinking over the matter carefully, " I know nothing that will destroy the love of a mother. Will pain—poverty—privation—cruelty—neglect—insult—sickness ? No," he said, " nor do I think that even death will destroy it."

And yet, now, this pale, meanly-clad boy had flashed a truth upon him that had fairly startled him. He felt its truth too. Now that his eyes were opened, he could count upon his fingers, case after case, that had come under his own notice, and he wondered how it had not occurred to him before.

And as he walked slowly home, the boy's

question kept ringing in his ears, "And if it will do that, it can't be good, sir, can it?"

"Good!" he mused; "ah, well, I'll think about it," and he did think about it, and to some purpose.

Harry thought about it too. He tried to imagine what Mike's mother once was like. She was young once, perhaps she was like Ethel then, for she was not bad-looking even now. Ah! could it be possible that Ethel could ever become like her, or could Douglas ever become like his own father?

His own questions almost made him shudder. The bare possibility of such a thing was terrible. And yet, his own father was once a bright, clever, impulsive lad, so his mother had told him. And what was he now? And what had made him what he was?

And falling on his knees, there and then, he asked for strength that he might keep the promise he had made to his dying mother.



HARRY RESISTS TEMPTATION.

CHAPTER XVI.

PERSECUTED.

"Sow, though the rock repels thee,
In its cold and sterile pride ;
Some cleft there may be riven,
Where the little seed may hide.
Fear not, for some will flourish,
And, though the tares abound,
Like the willows by the waters
Will the scattered grain be found."

ANNA SHIPTON.



HARRY mourned for Mike as if he had been his own brother, and never had life seemed more desolate and sad than during the few weeks that followed his death. Evening after evening he crept into his

poor little bed directly he had eaten his supper, and sometimes, indeed, without having tasted a morsel of food, and cried himself to sleep. Sometimes he wished that he had been taken instead of Mike, for he felt that the little fellow who was sleeping out under the snow was infinitely better off than he. Sorry as he was to lose him, and miss him as he did continually, yet in his less despondent moments he felt thankful that the poor boy had been taken. If he had lived, there seemed nothing for him but a life of sin and misery.

"It is better so," said Harry to himself when he was able to think calmly about the matter, "and it's selfish of me to wish I had gone instead. No! I must wait patiently; perhaps things will turn out better in time than I can see now."

As time wore on, and he got reconciled to the loss of Mike, he returned again to his old occupation, that had been a pleasure to him nearly ever since he could remember. For a long time he had been saving all he could to buy a box of water colours and some crayons, and once more he rejoiced in their possession, though how many suppers they had cost him nobody ever knew.

In trying to reproduce bits of scenery that had stamped themselves upon his memory while he lived at Cwmdare he forgot his pain and heart.

ache, and the dirty walls of his dingy room seemed to melt and vanish before his eyes, and there would stretch away instead glowing vistas of meadow and woodland, and hill and dale, and grassy knolls, and limpid streams that gleamed, and glittered, and flashed, in the golden sunlight, and he would hear again the rush and sough of the wind in the trees, and the lowing of the cattle in the valleys, and the laughter and shouts of the village children out on the hills. And sometimes he would start up from his seat as if to join them in their fun ; then, suddenly recollecting himself, he would sit down with a sigh, and turn to his work once more.

As spring wore away, however, he began to feel very much concerned about his father. For two or three months he had been very different to what Harry had ever seen him before. He drank less for one thing. At any rate, he was oftener sober when in the house than formerly ; but then, on the other hand, he was often away for days and nights together. Harry noticed, too, that he always seemed to have plenty of money, some of which he spent in purchasing things for their rooms, and occasionally—in what seemed to Harry—luxuries for the table. He had even purchased for Harry a suit of Sunday clothes, and was very much more careful about his own attire.

Yet all the while he grew more sullen and irritable, and started sometimes at the sound of a footstep on the pavement below, and was always careful to bolt the doors before he retired to rest. Instead of going to the public-house to drink, Mrs. Tubbs fetched it for him, and sometimes he would sit for a whole day indoors, as if buried in thought, and only go out when night came on.

Frequently, when he spent his evenings in the house, he would press Harry to have a glass with him, tell him that he had turned over a new leaf, but that it wasn't necessary that he should give it up altogether ; hinted that he had got into the way of making his fortune, and that if Harry would only stick to him, and help him in his work, they might both be gentlemen in a few years.

Sometimes he would fling out an ill-disguised sneer at what he termed Harry's pious ways, and tell him that he would never make anything out in life while he was so particular about little matters of truth and honesty.

"Come, Harry," he said one evening, "have a glass, and be a man. Your mother crammed you full of silly nonsense ; she'd have known better if she had been a man, and it's quite time you got rid of your old woman's ways."

"No," said Harry, quietly, "I promised her when she was dying, and I mean to stick to it."

"Well," said his father, insinuatingly, "your mother was a good soul—a very good woman, in fact—but then, Harry, she knew nothing about the world, or what a man requires to do the rough work of life."

"I think she had plenty of rough work," said Harry; "a great deal more than she ever ought to have had."

"True, boy; but I was unfortunate, or I should not have left her in the way I did, but I mean to make a man of you if you'll only be sensible."

"Hadn't you better make a man of yourself first?" said Harry, slipping out the words almost before he was aware.

Instantly his father flushed crimson, and clenched his fist savagely. "You're an impudent puppy," he hissed out at length, "but you'll have to come to, youngster, before you're much older; so mark my words."

"Come to what?" said Harry, flashing his father a look of defiance.

"Never mind now," said his father in a milder tone; "but don't make a fool of yourself, there's a good lad." And the subject dropped for that evening.

But a few evenings later his father commenced again. He knew by experience that threats availed nothing with Harry, so he resolved that by promises and insinuations he would break

down the boy's prejudices, and undo, if he could, the teachings of his praying mother. It was a painful sight, and one that we could almost imagine an angel might weep over—a father trying to corrupt the morals of his own and only child; trying to root out the good seed that had been planted in his heart with many tears and prayers; trying to hurl contempt at the counsels of a brave, patient mother, who loved her boy as her own life!

But Owen Thorne had miscalculated the effect of early impressions upon the heart of his boy. Amy Thorne had been first in the field, and the good seed she had sown had taken root before the enemy began to sow tares. The lessons Harry had learnt at his mother's knee had taken such a hold upon his heart and life that it was impossible for him to forget them. In his young days he had been trained in the way he should go, and he had no desire to depart from it now. So far he had failed to see any beauty or pleasure in a sinful life. Anyone more thoroughly miserable than his father he thought it would be difficult to find, and so it happened that, though Owen Thorne was very persistent in his endeavours to mould Harry to his own pattern, he made but little, if any, progress.

It may seem strange to some of my readers that a father should seek to corrupt his own

child. But my answer to that is, truth is often strange ; and the case we have mentioned is, alas, not a solitary one. Our large towns and cities are full of such examples, and children are taught, as the first lessons of their life, how to lie, and cheat, and steal.

The brave, sturdy, beautiful life of Harry Thorne was a continual rebuke to his father, and the debased and besotted man felt humiliated and ill at ease when in the presence of his son. Vice loves not the presence of virtue. A villain would be wretched in heaven.

But that was not all. It had been Owen Thorne's intention to make a "cat's-paw" of Harry ; to use him as a tool to accomplish his own wicked and selfish ends ; and he was annoyed almost past endurance that he had miserably failed. While his wife lived he had never thought of making use of the boy in any way. But when he found that she was dead, and that the boy was under his own control, and actually living with the very man whom he hated above every other man on earth, his plans took shape directly ; and yet now, at the end of two years, he found that not one of the plans had been carried out in the way that he had intended.

To be beaten, and by a mere child, was humiliating, he thought, and he resolved that, by fair means or foul, the boy should be brought to. And

so with a patience and a dogged determination that were worthy of a noble cause, he pursued his plan day after day of bending the boy's will to his own.

If Harry had possessed one particle of respect for his father, the result might have been, and in all probability would have been, very different. But Harry was too old now to be caught with chaff. He was nearly fifteen, though he did not look more than twelve. The hard struggle for bread, and the weary weight of care that pressed upon him continually, had stopped his growth. In fact, he was not so heavy by several pounds as on the day he left Cwmdare.

Harry generally listened patiently to what his father had to say, though he found it very difficult sometimes, for he knew that all his professions of affection and solicitude were but a mockery, that he was only trying to throw dust into his eyes by pretending that he had turned over a new leaf, and that there was some wicked and selfish motive at the bottom of it all.

He was sorely tempted once or twice to run away, and find his way back to Cwmdare, if that were possible, and confess all that he knew to his old friend, and leave his father to his fate. But at such times his mother's face seemed to rise up reproachfully before him, and her dying request rang again in his ears, and with a sigh he would

turn away from the tempting prospect, and take up again the heavy burden of what he conceived to be his duty.

But his father's persecution was not the greatest trial he had to bear. Several times when he had returned in the evening, weary with the day's toil, he had found the door locked, and when at length it was opened he found three or four evil-looking men in the room, who had been closeted with his father he knew not how long. At first they took little notice of him or he of them. Their conference having been put an end to by his return, one of the company would produce a pack of cards, and for the rest of the evening they would drink and smoke and throw about the cards on the table.

But as time wore on, and their visits grew more frequent, they became familiar, and tried to induce Harry to take a glass with them and join them in their games, and finding at length that coaxing had no effect they began to sneer at him, and loud guffaws were raised at Harry's expense. But sneers soon grew into abuse, and they left off calling him "pious Harry," and applied such epithets as "canting hypocrite," and "sneaking cur."

Harry bore all their abuse very patiently, but one day when two of the men got him on his back on the floor and tried to pour brandy down

his throat, while his father looked approvingly on, he lost all patience, and getting one of his hands free he struck the glass and sent it crashing against the wall, and the next mornent, by an almost superhuman effort, he struggled to his feet, and flashing his father a look of defiance, he said, "Listen to me, will you?"

"With pleasure," they all said, and they stood around him in a half circle, pretending they were greatly terrified. Then one of them said in a loud whisper, "He's going to preach us a sermon."

"Or give us a teetotal lecture," said a second.

"Not a bit of it," said a third, "he's going to sing us a Methody hymn."

"I want to say this," said Harry, addressing his father. "I've borne this insult long enough, and I'll bear it no longer, and unless you put a stop to it you'll wish you had."

"Oh, oh! hear the young coxcomb!" said one of the men.

"If he were my lad I'd knock him down," said a second. But Harry paid no heed to them.

"When I promised that I would stay with you and not betray you to anyone," he went on, "I did not expect such treatment as this, and if it is not stopped at once I'll forget every promise I made, I'll forget that you are my father, and as you have not spared me I will not spare

you. I give you fair warning, I will bear it no longer."

The effect of this speech upon Owen Thorne was almost electrical, he turned red and white by turns, and fairly cowed before the clear, steady gaze of Harry's eye.

"Come, mates," he said at length, "you had better leave the boy to me, and say no more to him at present."

From that evening his father's new companions left him in peace, and while they sat drinking or playing cards he pursued his favourite studies, and, notwithstanding he worked without a teacher, he did not work in vain. Yet all the while he got more and more concerned about his father. He felt sure that those evil-looking men that called so frequently meant mischief. "What could his father want with them?" was a question he asked himself again and again, and the more he thought about it the stronger became his conviction that they were up to no good.

This conviction was very painful to Harry. For two years he had clung to this man in the hope that he might do him good, had toiled like a little slave, and had suffered unheard-of privations that he might keep a home over their heads, and had tried by patient and unrequited kindness, and by unceasing prayer, to win his erring father to a better life, and yet all his

prayers and all his kindness seemed to have been in vain. He was no better, no kinder than when he dragged him away from Cwmdare ; nay, he feared that he was growing worse instead of better.

One evening in June Harry was sitting by the grimy window busy on a picture that he had been working at for several weeks. It was a view of Adam's cottage, with the plantation slanting up behind it lit up with the rays of the westerling sun, and a foreground of meadow-land where contented cattle browsed and happy children were at play. Adam was represented leaning on the garden gate serenely smoking his pipe, while Ethel was seated on the grass engaged in stringing daisies together, though her eyes in reality were fixed on Douglas and himself, who were practising long distances in jumping.

The figure of Ethel, however, had caused him more trouble than all the other parts of the picture put together, and try as he would he could not get it to his satisfaction. He had been sitting gazing at it for a long time very abstractedly, nibbling the while the end of his pencil, and paying no heed to his father and his three companions, who were sitting around a small table in the centre of the room carrying on a very earnest conversation in low and broken sentences.

Suddenly a sentence arrested his attention, and caused him to look furtively and suspiciously across at the group of men, who were discussing a plan of some kind that was stretched on the table before them. He could only hear whispered sentences, but they were sufficient to make his flesh creep.

"Old fellow — alone ?" he heard whispered.

"Ay," was the answer.

"No house nearer than — ?"

"That's — nearest."

"Stream divides — meadows ?"

"Ay."

"What part — Wales — sit — ?"

"Wait till we get there," he heard his father mutter in angry tones.

"Nothing to be done till the long nights come on, so let's go out and have a drink," said one of the men in louder tones.

Hastily Owen Thorne doubled up the plan they had been discussing and pushed it into his pocket, and rising with the others they all sallied out of the room together.

For awhile after they had gone Harry sat perfectly motionless. That an attack was meditated on Enoch's property, perhaps on his life, he had no doubt; and now arose the question, How was he to prevent it? To allow this vile scheme to be carried out would be to participate

in the crime. On the other hand, how could he put Enoch on his guard without betraying his father. And if these men discovered that he was in their secret and was trying to checkmate them, what would they not do to him ? For he felt that they were capable of anything that was bad.

When it grew dusk he put away his picture, and sat with his face in his hands trying to decide upon some plan of action that would be safe to himself and to his old friend. So occupied was he with his thoughts that he did not heed the flight of time. It must have been near midnight when he was startled by a shuffling noise on the narrow landing outside the door, followed a moment later by a loud crash as if a heavy body had fallen against the banisters of the stairs, then a loud thud on the stone floor below. For a moment or two after that all was silent as the grave. Then a horrible gurgling groan broke the midnight stillness, followed by a second more horrible still.

For a moment Harry stood spellbound, then rushed to the top of the stairs and loudly called for a light.



CHAPTER XVII.

A LAST RESOURCE.

"Be resigned,
Thou child of sorrow, to His sovereign will;
Drink, as He bids, the bitter cup, and bear
Thy cross in patience! From the holy hill
A gleam shall cheer thee, till safe-harboured there."

R. MANT.



HIGHER power than Harry's had interposed to frustrate the wicked design of Owen Thorne and his companions, and to lay the prime mover prostrate in the dust. It was not far short of midnight when Harry's father and his three

companions left a public-house where they had been drinking heavily by a side door, and staggered towards their several homes. Owen Thorne managed to reach the door of his lodgings without mishap, and almost noiselessly crept up the stairs on his hands and knees, but on raising himself to his feet to find the door handle, he lost his balance, and fell backward and headlong down the stairs. They were steep, narrow stairs, and in his drunken condition Owen Thorne fell heavily, breaking away the frail balustrade, and alighting on the stone flags below in a state of unconsciousness.

At any rate he was unconscious when Harry and Mrs. Tubbs found him, and remained so for many hours after. By the help of some of the neighbours, who had been aroused, the unconscious figure was carried upstairs, and laid upon his bed, and Harry was despatched with all possible haste for the nearest doctor.

It was broad day when that gentleman arrived, and after examining his patient—who had now recovered consciousness—with some care, he shook his head, and regarding for a few moments the miserable surroundings of the man, advised that he be taken to the workhouse infirmary, where he would receive far more attention than he could possibly receive where he was.

At the mention of the word “workhouse” the

miserable man opened his eyes with an imploring look, and making a great effort he gasped out, "Oh no, let me stay here; Harry will look after me;" and he turned his appealing eyes upon the boy he had so much abused, as if begging that his request might be granted.

"You are standing very much in your own light, my man, by wishing to stay here," said the doctor. "It would be very much better for you to consent to what I advise."

"You'll not leave me, Harry, will you?" said Owen Thorne, as if he did not heed the doctor's words; "don't leave me, Harry."

And as Harry looked down upon the white, anguished face, that was turned so beseechingly towards him, he felt for the first time just a spark of affection for this vicious man whom he called "his father."

"No, father," he said, "I will not leave you, but I'll try still to help you all I can."

"I've been a bad father to you, but don't leave me, Harry." Then turning to the doctor he said: "Will I get better, do you think?" And he waited for the answer with a wild, strange look in his eyes.

"I'm afraid not, my man," was the reply in slow, solemn tones.

"You don't think I'll die, do you? Oh, tell me that I shall not die just yet!" And he stared

at the doctor as if his eyes would start out of their sockets.

"No," said the doctor, "I don't think you are going to die just yet; but I think it is only right that you should know that I see no hope of your ever getting well again."

For a moment there was silence; then Owen asked, "Why can't I move my legs, doctor?"

"Because the spine is injured," said the doctor; "and you are paralysed from the waist."

"Oh, heavens!" he groaned, "and shall I never move my legs again?"

"I'm afraid you will never walk with them again."

"And be a cripple for the rest of my life?"

"I fear so."

"I'd sooner die. Give me some poison, doctor, and put me out of misery at once."

"How do you know that it would be putting you out of misery, even if I gave you poison?" said the doctor, kindly.

"I suppose you are right," said the wretched man, after a pause, "but it's awful hard," and he groaned out a terrible oath.

"That is poor preparation for death," said the doctor.

"But I'm not going to die yet," was the

reply. “I won’t die, I will live!” and he set his teeth firmly together.

“Don’t be too sure of that,” said the doctor. “And prayer would much better become you, at such a time as this, than swearing.”

Then Owen’s mood changed. “Oh, don’t let me die yet,” he wailed; “I know I’m not fit.”

Like many other wicked men, Owen Thorne was a great coward at heart, and though a few moments before he had asked for poison, that he might be put out of his misery, there was no sincerity in his words. In fact, he recoiled from the thought of dying, with perfect horror. In his young days he had been taught what death meant, and had been told of the great hereafter that lay beyond it, and though long years of sin had seared his conscience and hardened his heart, he could not wholly forget the teachings of his young days. And as he lay there upon his poor bed helpless, and in pain, and for aught he knew already in the grasp of death, the memory of those days, so long past and gone, came back to him with all the freshness and vividness of recent events. He tried to shut out the vision that continually started up before him, but it was in vain. If he had been well he could rush into the street, or into some public-house, or mingle with the crowd, and so banish these haunting ghosts

of other years ; but chained there to his bed by a terrible affliction, he was at their mercy. They seemed to him like so many imps of darkness sent to torment him. Not even in sleep was he at peace, for in dreams they came back again—to mock his misery, he thought—and whisper of a more terrible retribution that was yet in store for him.

Harry heard what the doctor said to his father with a sinking heart. It never occurred to him, in the early days of his father's affliction, that what seemed a terrible calamity, might be, in reality, a blessing in disguise ; that this seeming evil, that his father had brought upon himself, might be overruled by infinite mercy, and made productive of everlasting good. His only thought was : "What is to become of us ?" Of late his father had paid the rent, and found them both in clothes, and sometimes, indeed in food. But now he was helpless, and likely to remain so to the end of his life, and how could he nurse his father and keep a home over their heads at the same time ? That was a problem that he was unable to solve. He thought, that, perhaps, his father's companions who had shared his hospitality so frequently of late, might render him some assistance now that he was unable to help himself, but in this he was painfully mistaken. Had he given the subject any consideration he

would never have built any hopes upon such a rotten foundation. He might have known, from his own experience, that "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." It is true they called once, but on ascertaining the state he was in they went their ways, and left him to his fate. They could get nothing further out of him, so what cared they whether he lived or died?

For three or four days Owen Thorne would not permit Harry to go out of his sight. He seemed terrified at the thought of being left alone, and a dozen times a day he would extract the promise from Harry that he would not leave him. It was almost pitiful to see this cowed and broken-down man cringing before, and fawning upon, the boy he had so cruelly wronged.

He knew that if Harry left him to his fate it would only be what he deserved. And in his own heart, he wondered at the boy's patience and forbearance, wondered how, for two long years, he had submitted to so much abuse and neglect. What was it that had sustained the boy, and made him so strong to endure? It was a question that he could not answer; but the thought of his devotion seemed to stab him to the quick. He could not bear Harry out of his sight, and yet his ceaseless care was like heaping coals of fire upon his head.

When at length Harry went back to the grocery store, after being absent nearly a week, he was politely informed that his place was occupied by another.

"I should not have stayed away," pleaded Harry, "only father got hurt, and I have been obliged to stay with him."

"You sent us no word to that effect," said his late employer, "and after waiting three days we engaged another hand."

"I was so full of trouble," said Harry, the tears starting in his eyes, "that I forgot all about it."

"I am very sorry for you," was the reply, "for you have served us very well."

"But could you not take me on again," pleaded Harry, "for father is perfectly helpless, and I shall have to provide for him as well as for myself now."

"Impossible, quite impossible, but I shall be glad to give you a reference should you require one."

So Harry was adrift again, and what to do he did not know. If he only had himself to care for he would have had no fear. But at home there was a living wreck that claimed his care, and he could not leave him, not even for a single day.

"No good will come of fretting over it," he said to himself, at length. "I must try some

other place ; ” and from morning till noon, and from noon till night, he tramped from street to street, but without success. He had heard a great deal about the commercial depression that was being felt all over the country, but he began to feel it himself now. Everywhere the answer was the same—that either their hands were working short time and for less wages, or had been dismissed altogether.

When Harry had been tramping the town for a week he was almost ready to give up in despair. True there were a couple of sovereigns left yet in his father’s purse, but they would not last for ever. A month or five weeks at the outside, even with the most rigid economy, would see the end of them ; and what would they do then ? But he kept up his spirits as best he could, and hoped for the best. Poverty, alas ! was no new thing to him. Excepting the few months he had spent at Cwmdare, he had known nothing else. But when his mother was living she bore the burden, and he was never allowed to know the worst. But now he had to bear the burden, and bear it all alone.

Owen Thorne did not seem to trouble himself about ways and means. For a month after the accident his life hung in a balance, and the parish doctor, to whose care he had been handed over, did not know which way the scale would turn.

He seemed to know himself that his life hung by a thread, and day after day he lay in the desolate room perfectly still and with closed eyes, only opening them when he heard Harry's footfalls on the stairs. What his thoughts were during those days nobody knew, but knowing what we do of his life, we judge that they were anything but pleasant.

But at the end of a month the tide that seemed to have been going out all that time began to flow back again. At first it was almost imperceptible, and only the skilled eye of the doctor could tell that it had an inward flow. Owen Thorne himself declared that he was worse, and he got so peevish and irritable at length that Harry thought that his father was right and the doctor wrong.

"A sure sign that he is getting better," said the doctor to Harry; "but bless me, boy, it had been better for himself and you if he had died."

"Will he never get perfectly well?" said Harry.

"Never!" was the reply. "The spine is hopelessly injured, and as soon as he is able to be moved he ought to be got into a hospital for incurables."

Harry said nothing to his father of what the doctor had said, for he felt that the wretched man had quite enough to bear. Nor did he tell him

of his own troubles, nor how starvation loomed ahead, and at no very distant period.

Two months passed away, and though Harry had searched diligently he had found no employment. Now and then he got an odd job or two. Once he earned a sixpence for getting in a load of coals, and during the afternoon of the same day he got threepence more for chopping up some firewood. Now he got a penny for holding somebody's horse, and now for carrying a bundle. But it was a precarious and an uncertain pittance that he eked out in that way, and some days he did not earn a single copper.

At length downright want stared him in the face, and for a long time he sat pondering the question, "What was to be done?" "It must go," he said to himself at length, and watching his opportunity when his father was asleep, he folded up his best suit of clothes and went out and pawned them for a sovereign. That helped him on for another three weeks with what he could earn at odd jobs, but at the end of that time grim want and he were face to face again, and so week by week something was taken to the pawn-shop till he had absolutely nothing left to pawn. And all this while the father never knew the straits to which the boy was driven, he thought he was still in his old situation and was earning enough to keep them both.

And so the summer wore away and autumn came again, and when Harry noticed the shortening days and thought of the approach of winter, he was fain to give up in despair and lie down and die. One last resource was left, and that was to go out again and sing in the streets. Week after week he had put aside the thought, for it was inexpressibly painful to him. His sensitive nature shrank from the idea with a repugnance that no words can describe. It seemed so humiliating to be a street singer. But he had to confess to himself at last that there was no help for it. It was that, or starve.

So one chill afternoon in November he went forth into one of the more busy thoroughfares and, leaning against a lamp-post, he closed his eyes, and sang in tones so sad and sweet that they seemed to come from a breaking heart—

Lead, Kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
 Lead Thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
 Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
 The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

He opened his eyes at length and saw in the little crowd that had gathered around a face that dashed every drop of blood from his check and almost stopped the beating of his heart. Could it be possible? Could there be another face in

the world like that? It was altered certainly, older looking and careworn. Yet it must be her. "Ethel!"

He only whispered the name and she did not hear him, but the next moment she stepped towards him and said—

"Harry! Harry Thorne! can it be possible that you have come to this?" He thought there was a tone of reproach in her voice, but perhaps it was only fancy.

"Oh! Ethel, Ethel—" he began, but he did not finish the sentence. The next moment a stern "Move on!" sounded in his ears, and a policeman's heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he was pushed through the little crowd and sent at a sharp trot down a narrow street, with an injunction not to block the thoroughfare again if he wished to keep outside a lock-up.

As soon as he dared he ventured back again to the spot where he had left Ethel standing, but she was nowhere visible. For a full hour he walked up and down the street, peering into every 'bus and into the face of nearly every passer-by, but no other sight of Ethel's beautiful face was vouchsafed to him. Oh, if he could only speak with her for five minutes, he thought, tell her that he was not wicked and dishonest, and explain to her why she found him in such circumstances. His poverty and humiliation seemed

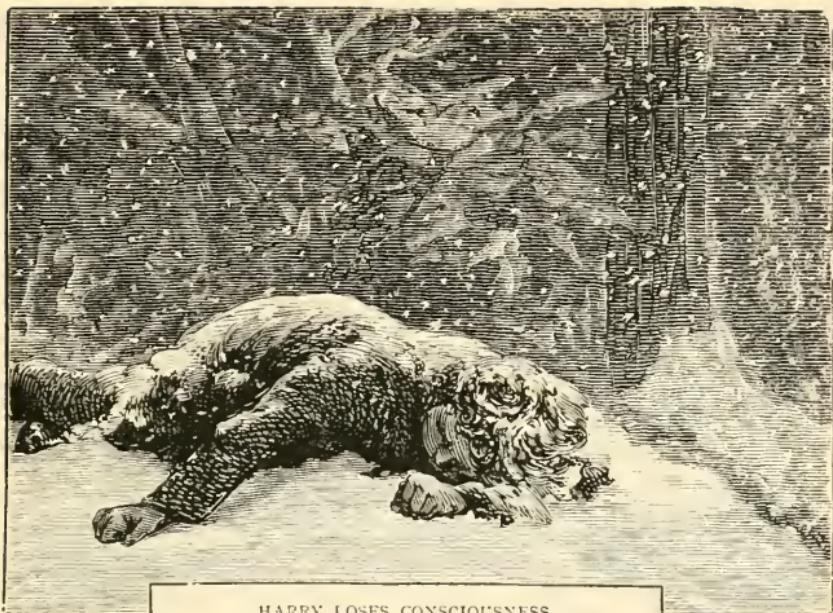
doubly hard to bear now, since she had seen him, and he had been denied the privilege of telling her what it meant. Must the one hope that had cheered him through all those months of toil and privation be given up? Oh, it was hard to meet thus, and part again without a single word of explanation. She would forget him now, or think of him only as a vagrant of the street, unworthy of a single thought. A great gulf had come between them, and he saw her standing on the farther side and on sunny heights that he might never hope to reach.

For months he had cheered himself with the thought that those whom he loved the best knew nothing of the life he led, and that the day might come, and he believed would come, when he would be able to stand before them again with no stain upon his name. And they would never know through what depths of want and poverty he had wandered. But that was over now. Ethel had seen him in ragged attire and feet almost bare, singing in the streets. And he knew too that he had looked guilty and confused, and she had seen a policeman rudely push him away as if he were the commonest vagrant of the street. And what *would* she think? Oh, if he could see her now, he thought, he could explain it all. But if time rolled on and no explanation was given, the gulf would

widen and deepen, and she never would descend to speak to him again, and they would meet no more till they met in heaven.

He forgot his poverty as he went slowly towards his wretched home that night, and though he went supperless to bed, he felt no hunger. And the next day and the day after that he went and sang at the same place, heedless of the policeman's threat and careless as to whether he received any coppers. If only Ethel could hear his voice and come to him once more, that was all he desired. But she never came again.

And as the days wore on and lengthened into weeks, his heart grew sadder and his cheeks more pale and thin; his steps got feeble, too, for hunger pinched him sore, and the burden of care grew heavier all the while. And in the storm-swept sky there burned no star of hope, and over the howling sea there came no voice of cheer. Forsaken, it seemed to him, by God and man, what yet remained to him and his father but to lie down together and die?



HARRY LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE THRESHOLD.

"Moan, ye wild winds ! around the pane,
And fall thou drear December rain !
Fill with your gusts the sullen day,
Tear the last clinging leaves away !
Reckless, as yonder naked tree,
No blast of yours can trouble me."

BAYARD TAYLOR.

"**A**FRIEND in need is a friend indeed," and such a friend did Harry find in Mr. Walters. The minister stumbled across our hero one evening as he dragged himself wearily along the dirty

streets, and accompanied him to his wretched home. Mr. Walters had long wondered what had become of the pale, thoughtful-looking boy, that had once been such a regular hearer of his, and who had once put a question to him that had caused him no small amount of perplexity.

Mr. Walters hardly knew Harry again, he was so thin and poorly clad, and when, after a second look he decided to speak to him, he was not at all certain that he was not mistaken in the lad. Harry was walking with downcast eyes, taking no notice of anything, but when Mr. Walters spoke to him his face brightened in a moment, and he encountered the minister's look of inquiry with a glad smile, and rushed forward eagerly to grasp his hand.

By dint of judicious questioning Mr. Walters arrived at a pretty correct idea of Harry's circumstances, and there and then gave him five shillings out of the funds of a benevolent society connected with his church. For his father's sake Harry gladly and thankfully accepted the money, and yet he could not help feeling that it was not for such as his father that the money had been contributed, but for the deserving poor of Mr. Walters's church and congregation. But such poverty as his could not stand upon ceremony or sentiment, and while the minister stayed to talk

to the invalid he went forth into the streets again to purchase bread.

When he returned Mr. Walters had gone, and his father lay with closed eyes, and a dark and almost savage scowl upon his face. He knew what the look meant, and forbore to ask any questions, but he greatly feared that the minister had not received very kindly treatment.

He never knew all that transpired, and it was well he did not, for when Owen Thorne discovered that his visitor was a minister of the gospel he became livid with rage. Mr. Walters, not knowing the character of the man, talked to him quietly and pointedly for a few moments about the mercy of God and the ministry of pain and affliction, when suddenly the sick man turned upon his visitor with such a torrent of abuse interspersed with the most frightful oaths, that Mr. Walters was horrified, and stood for several moments perfectly dumfounded. It was so sudden, so uncalled for, so horrible in a sick man, who to all appearance was on the verge of death, that the minister did not know what to do or what reply to make. When, however, he did attempt to speak, Owen Thorne put his fingers in his ears, and closed his eyes, and Mr. Walters, perceiving that he could do no good, quietly took his departure.

Harry's father made no allusion to the matter,

and Mr. Walters did not call again for two or three weeks, and in the meanwhile Harry informed his father that the minister was about the only friend he had in the world, and that he was trying to get him a situation; and then for the first time Owen Thorne was made acquainted with the real state of affairs, and the straits to which his boy was driven. So that when Mr. Walters called again he felt compelled to treat him with civility, though he requested him not to talk to him about religion; "it is all a pack of lies and humbug," he said, "concocted for the purpose of frightening silly women and children," accompanying these observations with many oaths and curses.

Mr. Walters found it a much more difficult matter to find a situation for Harry than he had imagined, and several weeks passed away and our hero was still dependent upon the charity of his friend, and the few coppers he could eke out, by doing odd jobs and sometimes by singing in the streets.

As Christmas drew near once more Harry's thoughts instinctively wandered back to Cwmdare, and at length such an unutterable longing seized him to visit the old spot, that he resolved, if he could get his father's consent, he would go back and throw himself upon the mercy and protection of his old friend.

He did not reason about the matter, for he had a vague feeling that if he did he should persuade himself out of his resolve. So when questions arose within him as to what kind of reception he might expect to get, he put them aside. The thought of going back to Cwmdare, was the one honey-drop in his bitter cup of sorrow, the one star that gleamed in the storm-swept sky, and he would not permit himself to think of the heavy clouds that hung round on the dark horizon, that might at any moment blot it out for ever.

There were moments when he felt that his hope was like an apple of Sodom, that he had only to touch it and it would fall to ashes; but he resolved that he would not touch it, that he would feast his eyes upon it as long as he might, and try to believe that it was rich and ripe and luscious. He might be living in a "fool's paradise," in all probability he was, but it was "paradise" for all that, while it lasted. And he would enjoy the illusive dream till the stern awaking should banish it for ever.

He told Mr. Walters of his intention, and the kind-hearted minister readily promised to see that his father was cared for while he was away.

" You are not afraid that I will not come back again? " questioned Harry.

" Not in the least, " said Mr. Walters, laying

his hand upon Harry's dark curls, and looking down into his wan, pinched face. "I think I could trust you anywhere."

"Thank you so much," said Harry. "I hope some day I may be able to repay you for your kindness."

"Don't mention it, Harry," said the minister, "I am only too thankful that I can be of service to you."

"But I never told you why I left Cwmdare, and why I never tried to go back before."

"But that does not weaken my confidence in you, my boy," said the minister. "You will tell me some day, perhaps, when the proper time comes."

"Oh yes, I will," said Harry, impulsively; "but it has all been for father's sake."

"I thought as much, but don't say anything more about it just now, for I know the subject is painful to you."

Harry made no reply, and Mr. Walters continued: "I hope you will find your friends well, and that you will get the help you need. Your father, of course, is quite willing for you to go?"

"I have not mentioned the matter to him yet," said Harry; "I wanted to see my way clear first."

"Quite right! quite right! You may tell him

for me, if you like, that he shall be well cared for while you are away."

Harry did his best to thank the minister, and then went home to talk the matter over with his father.

Owen Thorne lay with closed eyes upon the poor bed upon which he had languished for six weary months. He was very pale and haggard, and wasted almost to a skeleton. Severe as had been his bodily sufferings, his mental anguish had been far greater. He wished sometimes that he could fall into a dreamless sleep, and never wake again to all eternity. It was horrible to lie there day after day thinking, thinking, ever thinking. And even at night while he slept, his day-thoughts took spectral shapes, and haunted him in frightful dreams. Oh, how he longed to be free from it all, to be liberated from the terrible anguish of mind and body, and yet he dreaded death with a perfect horror. If death were the end of existence he would have welcomed it gladly; but alas! he feared that for him it would be but the beginning of greater misery. And so he lay and writhed in mental torture day after day. For the first month after the doctor had pronounced all immediate danger past he seemed like one insane; day by day he raved and swore in the most frightful manner; but for the last two or three months he had been more quiet and seem-

ingly resigned, he spoke very little to anyone, but maintained throughout the day a sullen and dogged silence, with an occasional outburst of fretfulness or anger.

Harry seated himself by his father's bedside, and looked pitifully down upon the poor wasted form outlined under the scanty covering. For awhile neither spoke, for Harry did not know how to begin, and his father seemed in no humour for conversation.

"I've got no situation yet," said Harry, at length; but a sullen growl was the only answer he got.

"I've kept putting off the evil day as long as I could," said Harry, speaking more freely now that the ice was broken, "and hoping for the best, but I think it can't be put off any longer."

"What do you mean?" snarled his father.

"I mean that we are destitute, father. I've pawned everything that I can pawn, I've tried in every way to get bread for you and myself, and but for the kindness of Mr. Walters we should have been driven to the parish for relief long before this, or else have died of starvation."

"Don't mention the parish, for heaven's sake," gasped Owen Thorne; "if you apply for relief they will walk me off to the workhouse at once."

"But what am I to do?" said Harry.

"Do anything, only don't let me go to the

workhouse, don't, boy ! dont ! I shall die if you do!"

"But do you know that starvation stares us in the face?"

"I did not know it was as bad as that. But is there nothing that you can do?"

"There is only one thing."

"And what is that?"

"I don't know how it may succeed, so I think I had better not tell you until I have tried it."

"As you like, only be quick about it."

"You give me full liberty, then, to do the best I can?"

"Ay, boy ! do anything; go anywhere; only don't let me go into the workhouse."

"I start on the quest, then, to-morrow morning," said Harry. "I don't like leaving you on Christmas eve, but there's no help for it."

"Leaving me? What do you mean?"

"I must leave you for a day or two, but Mr. Walters has promised that you shall want for nothing while I am away."

"Curse the parsons!"

"You need not curse him, father. Mr. Walters is the only earthly friend we have at present."

"To think I should be beholden to a parson!" he muttered, as if he did not heed Harry's words.

Harry intended to start early the next morning, but when the time came he found that he had so

many little things to do for his father's comfort, that it was nearly noon before he got off. His father did not seem to concern himself about his movements, for which he felt very thankful, for he dreaded all the morning lest he should insist on knowing where he was going, and Harry was anxious that he should not know. He had got his permission to do anything, or go anywhere, as he thought best, and that was all he wanted.

Harry could not help imprinting a kiss upon his father's pale brow when he left, for he was getting to love the poor helpless wretch, that he called "his father," despite all the ill-treatment he had received.

"Good-bye, father," he said, "I'll be back again as soon as possible," and without waiting for a reply, he hurried down the stairs, and out of the house into the wintry street.

Harry was too late to catch the through express to Newport and Cardiff, which would have taken him, had he been in time, over a considerable portion of his journey. And indeed he had to wait for nearly an hour before any train started in the direction he wished to go. And then it was slow travelling, stopping at every station, and sometimes where no station was, till Harry got so impatient that he felt half inclined sometimes to open the carriage door and get out and walk. To make matters worse, he permitted himself

to be carried on a dozen miles beyond a junction where he ought to have changed trains, and had to wait an hour before there was another train to bring him back. And even at length when he got to the junction, and leaped out on the platform, stiff and cold, he found himself too late for the train he ought to have gone by, and had to wait for a later one still.

Harry had not been much used to railway travelling, but his experience that day did not impress him very favourably with the conduct of the railway officials. He saw the porters touching their caps to well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, taking care of their luggage, and answering all their questions with almost fulsome civility; but he was poor and meanly clad, and could not "tip" the porters, could not have come by train at all but for the kindness of a friend, and when, once or twice during the journey, he happened to ask a question in a timid manner of some passing porter, he scarcely got a civil answer.

The two or three hours' delay caused by his going beyond the junction was not his fault, he knew, but there was no one to whom he could complain, and slights were no new things in his experience.

It was after six when, at last, the welcome word, Llanvarcwmtrydd, fell on his ear. In a

little while now he would know the best or the worst. Only five miles lay between him and Cwmdare, and the way was not strange to him. An hour and a half's sharp walking, and then! and at the thought his heart throbbed so wildly that he had to put his hand to his side to still its loud beating.

He did not heed the cold nor darkness, nor the leaden sky that threatened a snow storm before midnight. He was weary and almost faint for lack of food, for he had tasted nothing since his scanty breakfast of bread and water, yet he did not seem to be conscious of either.

The station-master looked curiously at him as he wrapped his thin, patched jacket more closely around him, and hurried away into the darkness. Harry recognized him, in the brief glance he caught of his face, as his old friend the loquacious porter, whom he had met at the railway terminus more than three years before, and who, in the meanwhile, had been advanced to the important position of master of this wayside station.

“Bless me!” said John Pierce to himself, as he stood staring into the darkness where Harry had disappeared, “I’ve seen that little chap afore, that’s sartain; there’s some’at about his face that’s familiar-like, some’ow. I wonder, now, who the little chap is, and where he’s goin’

all alone on a night like this. I wish I'd spoken to him. But there!" and he turned into his little office with a disappointed look—"what's the use o' wishin' when it's too late?"

Meanwhile Harry was hurrying along as fast as he could, between the mighty hills that rose on either side of him, steep as a house roof. The night was dark and very still, now and then the wind stirred the sere leaves that lay thick upon the ground, or sighed for a moment among the bare branches of the trees ; then all again was silent as the tomb. Harry could not help thinking of the night he came that way before, and of all he had passed through since. Opposite the gap in the hills where he had got lost, he paused for a moment, as if there were some fascination about the spot. Far up the dark glen he heard the musical tinkling of the stream that rippled on over its stony bed in defiance of the frost king, and sang none the less sweetly because it sang alone, and only the silent hills were there to listen.

At the turn of the road from which the "Traveller's Rest" was visible he paused again, as if disappointed that the solitary gleam no longer shone in the darkness.

"Old Nancy's dead, maybe," he said, then turned to the right and hurried on with quickened steps, for he was fairly on the Cwmdare road

now. Oh, how his heart throbbed as the dim outline of the hills became more and more familiar to him. He had wandered over nearly all of them with Douglas, and sometimes with Ethel, while in search of rare ferns or pleasant nooks to sketch. Still on he pressed, hardly conscious of the fact that his strength was fast failing him, and that it was well he was nearing his journey's end. Already he had cleared three-fourths of the journey. Another half hour's walking, at the outside, and Cwmdare should be gained.

For the last quarter of an hour the wind had been rising. Far up the sides of the wind-swept hills he heard it soughing in the clumps of firs, making pleasant, dreamy music that sounded almost like a lullaby.

Still on ; with steps that were flagging now, for the wind caught him every now and then as it swept in fierce gusts down the valley, bearing on its wings great feathers of snow.

At length he saw the welcome lights shining from the cottage windows of Cwmdare, the sight of which nearly stopped the beating of his heart, and for a moment he had to steady himself against a gate by the roadside.

Then the questions that he had put aside day after day came back in all their force, and would not be banished.

"Why had he come to Cwm dare? What claim had he on Enoch Walder? Was it not madness to think that Enoch would help the man that had robbed him, and meant to murder him? Would not all Cwm dare rise up and hoot him (Harry) out of the village when they knew he had returned? Would not the children even point at him as an ingrate and a thief? And, worst of all, would not Douglas and Ethel spurn him as one unworthy of their friendship?"

Yes, it was more than likely that all this would be the case. Yet he was glad he had come, he could but die, and he would sooner die at Cwm dare than anywhere else in the world.

Leaving the gate, he pressed forward again as fast as his rapidly-failing strength would permit. The snow was coming down now in blinding drifts, and the wind roared among the leafless trees like the surging of waves upon the shore. He felt now that he could not hold out much longer, but the goal was almost reached. He was fairly in the village now; under the wood yonder he could see the lights gleaming out across the meadows from Adam's cottage. How familiar it looked! Now he was in the lane that led down to Enoch's house. The tall poplars swayed and moaned as he passed along under their shadow. Now the cottage was visible, and, yes! a light was shining from the window.

For a moment he rested upon the garden gate. Could he dare go and knock at the door? Would he be welcomed or spurned? He did not know. There was one thing, however, that he was conscious of, and that was that his nerves could bear the tension no longer; already a mist was gathering before his eyes, and a noise, louder than the roaring of the wind, was in his ears. Blindly he felt for the latch, and pushed open the gate, and staggered to where he knew the door was, for he could not see it now. What if consciousness should leave him before he could lift the knocker? Then Enoch would not know he had come, and in the morning they would find him buried in the snow, stiff, and stark, and cold.

Perhaps that would be best after all, better than being spurned from the door with bitter reproaches.

"Oh, God, help me!" he moaned, and reached out his hand in the darkness to find the door, but alas! it was not within his reach, and with a low cry he sank slowly to the ground. Then all was peace. He felt not now the gnawing of hunger, nor the keen biting of the cold. Rest had come at last to his aching head and tired feet. Right across the doorway he lay, with his head resting on his arm, and the snowflakes fell, and weaved a winding-sheet for him, and the wind moaned his

requiem in the tall poplars, and no one in the village knew that the wanderer had returned, and how his strength had failed him on the very threshold of the house he had sought.





THE RIDERLESS HORSE.

CHAPTER XIX.

EVENTS AT CWMDARE.

"'Far hence be Bacchus' gifts,' Hector rejoined,
'Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unerves the limbs, and dulls the noble mind :
Let chiefs abstain—and spare the sacred juice
To sprinkle to the gods—'tis fitter use.'

HOMER.

TWILL now be necessary, for the proper unfolding of this story, that we go back to the day on which Harry's father dragged him away from Cwm-dare. As we stated in a previous chapter, Enoch Walder was very indignant on the discovery of a

few words of writing on a slip of paper, and in consequence of this discovery took no part in the diligent search that was made for Harry for several days after his disappearance. The words were these :—“ My ruse has answered well.—H. T.”

“ The young villain ! ” groaned Enoch, glaring at the slip of paper as if his eyes would start out of their sockets. “ And is this the return he makes me for feeding him, clothing him, schooling him, and treating him as if he were a young prince instead of a beggar ? ” And Enoch stamped on the floor in the fierceness of his anger.

“ Oh, blind, blind old fool that I have been, not to see through his hypocrite ways. Why did I trust him at all ? As if I had not been deceived times enough before. Had I not vowed that I would never again trust anyone living ? Had I not declared a thousand times over that there was no such thing as gratitude in the world, that every man and woman and child in the world was as selfish as the grave, and that I was no better than the worst of them ? Oh, blind, blind that I have been ! ” And Enoch took two or three marches round the room by way of cooling off.

“ I see it all now,” he said, stopping suddenly in the middle of the room. “ All that story the

young vagabond brought to me about the attempt upon my life was but a part of a well-arranged scheme. To think that the young dog should be in league with *that* man—the man that has robbed my life of all that could make life worth the living. How well they gauged my weakness! And how patiently he bided his time, till he knew that I had a good sum of money in the house!" And Enoch shook his fist at some imaginary object.

"Thy ruse *has* answered well, thou son of thy father," he groaned. "Oh that I could lay my hand on thee now! And yet," he continued in a milder tone, "I loved the lad, loved him for her sake. He seemed good too, and he had her eyes, and her ways. Oh my poor child!" And the old man sat down on a chair, and hid his face in his hands, while his whole frame shook with emotion.

He soon recovered himself, however, and began to rave as fiercely as before. For two or three weeks he scarcely spoke to anyone, he spent most of his days rambling alone among the hills, and often slept at night in his cave. The villagers were greatly astonished at his strange behaviour, and yet they durst not ask him any questions, and Enoch was not the man to offer any explanation of his conduct. Adam was besieged with questions, but he was quite unable to explain the

mystery. He pretended, however, that he knew a great deal more than he did, and tried to look profoundly wise when questioned about the matter. Could they have heard Adam talking to himself, however, they would have heard something like the following :—

“ He’s gone off it this time, clean as a whistle ; the trouble ‘as turned his yed, not a bit o’ doubt on it. He liked that boy a mighty sight ; I believe he wur the very apple o’ his eye. He wur crazed enow before, the Lord knows, an’ this ‘as finished the job. He’s as mad as a March hare this time. I’ve seen ‘im precious flighty afore, but oh Lor’, this caps the lot.”

In three or four weeks, however, Enoch gave up his solitary rambles and settled down once more at the cottage, and as time wore on he found that the hard thoughts he had cherished of Harry would not stay. Day by day he tried to persuade himself that the boy was an ingrate and a thief, and yet in his heart he could not believe it, while ever and anon the lad’s frank open face, and clear honest eyes would start up before him, and the old man would cower before the vision.

He found himself too, unconsciously gathering up pleasant reminiscences of the lad’s sojourn at Cwmdare, and chuckling fondly on the happy hours they had spent together. The cottage too

was dark and cheerless now that his presence was no longer there to brighten it, and even the hills and fields wore a more sombre hue.

After a while he began to weigh the evidence again. He examined the slip of paper upon which were the five words traced in pencil, and compared the writing with Harry's copy books, and then the truth flashed upon him that he had been grossly deceived, and that he had cruelly wronged the boy.

The next morning, after an early visit to the cottage, Adam rushed home to Eve with the exclamation—

“Oh Lor’ a mercy, he’s off it again ! ”

“Who ? What ? ” said Eve, looking up in astonishment.

“The maaster,” said Adam. “Mad as a sheep again. What’s a comed over him I don’t know any more than Jeremiah up in the sycamore tree, but he’s off it again as sure as Moses.”

To a certain extent Adam was right. The way Enoch talked and raved, and heaped upon himself the most bitter reproaches, was enough to make anyone think that he was not quite right in his head.

“And her boy too,” he would say ; “to think I permitted that villain to carry him off and never made an effort to save him ! Oh what a miserable, selfish, suspicious old wretch I am ! And I thought

I was so clever too, and that I could see things so clear, when all the while I was blinder than ever. Oh Lord, forgive me." And the old man would groan in very bitterness of spirit.

He grew more sober after a while, and his self-reproaches became less frequent and vehement, while he did all that lay in his power to discover the boy's whereabouts, and instituted inquiries on every hand. But all his efforts were fruitless, and the weeks rolled on and lengthened into months, but they brought no change; and the months lengthened into years, till Harry was no longer talked about in the village. He had come among them suddenly one bright autumn morning, had tarried among them for a few brief months, and then had disappeared as suddenly as he had come. Who he was, whence he came, or whither he had gone, no one knew. His appearance was a nine days' wonder, and so was his disappearance, and then the even flow of Cwmdare life moved quietly on again, till in time Harry was almost if not entirely forgotten.

Nearly two years passed away, and again Cwmdare was nearly startled out of its seven senses. Early one morning it was whispered that old Squire Wynne had been thrown from his horse and killed. The news spread through the village like wildfire, as bad news will. And inquiries at the Grange only confirmed the sad

truth. There was very little to be learned in connection with the sad event. Somewhere during the small hours of the morning his horse had walked into the stable-yard riderless. The groom, who was waiting up until his master returned, noticed that the animal was quite cool, and did not seem in the least excited. Very much alarmed, however, by the non-appearance of his master, the groom had aroused the household, and a search expedition at once set out.

They knew the way the horse had come, for Squire Wynne had gone to a card party at the house of a gentleman some six miles away. They had scarcely proceeded two miles when they found him lying by the roadside, quite dead, though scarcely cold.

From inquiries made at the house where he had been playing cards, it was ascertained that he had drunk heavily, as was his wont, and that he had left soon after midnight, considerably under the influence of liquor. His host had done his best to persuade him to stay for the night, but he would not hear of it. He seemed to be able to keep his seat after he had mounted without any difficulty, and the horse moved away at a walking pace. No one anticipated any danger, for it was no new thing for the Squire to ride away from a card party almost helplessly

drunk, the sagacious horse taking home his helpless master in perfect safety.

The general opinion was that the Squire had fallen asleep, and had dropped out of his saddle on to his head ; that theory would easily account for his broken neck.

“Committed suicide,” was Enoch’s sententious remark, when he heard of the occurrence ; “taken his own life as truly as if he had cut his throat or hung himself.”

The twelve jurymen, however, who were got together to consider the case, thought differently. They said he “died by the visitation of God,” and there the matter ended.

Of course there was great grief and consternation at the Grange, Douglas was summoned home from Rugby with all possible haste, and until his arrival Mrs. Wynne seemed almost beside herself with grief. He was her only stay now ; her brave, bright, clever boy ; and as she looked into his handsome face, she felt sure that he would redeem the name of Wynne from the stain his father had brought upon it, for it had long grown into a kind of proverb among the sporting gentlemen of the neighbourhood “to be as drunk as Wynne.” Alas ! she did not know then that her clever boy had inherited his father’s appetite ; an appetite that had been fostered from his very infancy. She did not

know how his love for wine had already brought him into many scrapes at school, and how that on more than one occasion he had been in danger of being dismissed in disgrace.

The day of the funeral was a sad day for all. Then came the reading of the will. It contained very few provisions. All the property was left to Mrs. Wynne during the term of her natural life, after which it was to be equally divided between the two children. People said that no will could have been more just or generous; and yet in reality it was but a farce and mockery. The kind-hearted old lawyer did not tell Mrs. Wynne that her dead husband had had nothing to leave, that he had drunk and gambled away all his property, that even the Grange itself was mortgaged to its full value, and that the only legacy he had left them was a legacy of poverty.

Mrs. Wynne, however, was not long in discovering the real state of affairs. Scarcely had the grave closed over her husband, when his creditors came crowding around her like a pack of hungry wolves, each demanding immediate settlement of his account. For a while Mrs. Wynne seemed utterly powerless to act or think, while Douglas stormed and raved as if he would have taken leave of his senses. Ethel only was calm and unmoved, she seemed suddenly to develop into a woman, and while her brother

tried to forget what he termed his disgrace in the wine cup, Ethel became her mother's counsellor and stay.

In a few weeks most of the property had fallen under the auctioneer's hammer. Enoch Walder bought the Grange, giving for it a great deal more than it was worth; that was his way of helping the widowed mother in her hour of need; he managed also, being one of the executors, to settle more than one account out of his own pocket, and in this way a small annuity belonging to Mrs. Wynne was saved out of the general wreck, while all the creditors were paid in full.

Enoch offered Mrs. Wynne the privilege of living at the Grange rent free, but she would not hear of it. She had two brothers living, one in London, the other in Birmingham, who had promised to help her all they could. In fact the brother in London had offered Douglas a situation in his office, with a hint that he might in time become partner in the concern, especially as his own son had eschewed business and had adopted the legal profession; while the brother in Birmingham had written to say that he had discovered what he thought would be a capital situation for Ethel, and urging her to come over at once. Ethel, though but a mere child in years, was but too glad of an opportunity of earning her own bread, and started for Birmingham at

once ; she found, however, on her arrival that the situation was not one she could undertake, and after spending a few days with her uncle, she resolved to return home again to Cwmdare. And it was while walking to the station with her uncle that she encountered Harry singing in the streets. It was the voice that attracted her, she felt sure that she had heard it before, but could not tell when. It was much against her uncle's wish that she pushed her way into the little crowd that had gathered round the singer, for they had only just time to catch the train ; but there was a fascination in the tones of the voice she could not resist.

She had often wondered what had become of Harry, and in her endeavour to ascertain had plied Enoch and Adam with innumerable questions, but all to no purpose ; and when the mystery of his disappearance ceased to be talked about, she did not forget him. He had twined himself about her child's heart as no other playmate ever had. In their quiet ramblings among the hills they had confided to each other their hopes and ambitions, had weaved bright fancies together, and built their castles in the air, though, somehow, their castles always joined each other, or else blended into one. To her Harry was always a kind of hero, whose future was to be one of increasing splendour ; and, somehow, she never thought of Harry's future without asso-

ciating, in some vague way, her own with it. It was a strange fancy, and one that she often smiled over in after years, though Harry was never forgotten.

Nothing, therefore, could exceed her surprise and disappointment when she discovered that the street singer was none other than Harry Thorne. Could it be possible? she asked herself again and again. Was this the hero whose future was to be such a brilliant success? Alas! what a failure. The meaning of it, however, she resolved to know, if possible, and for this purpose pressed forward to speak to him. And it would be hard to tell which felt the interference of the policeman most keenly, Ethel or Harry.

"Come, Ethel," said her uncle, as she stood gazing in bewilderment after Harry's retreating figure, "we shall be too late for the train unless we hurry." She did not reply, but taking his proffered arm, they walked rapidly away in silence in the direction of the station.

Ethel told no one, on her return home, that she had seen Harry, not even Enoch. Once or twice she resolved to tell him, but when it came to the point her courage always failed her, she thought it would grieve him so, and she shrank from the idea of giving him pain. A fortnight later, Mrs. Wynne, Douglas, and Ethel, bade farewell to the Grange and to Cwmdare. What

the parting cost them no one ever knew, for no one was there to witness their grief. They gave no one their future address, they only said that they were going to London. Mrs. Wynne, notwithstanding her sorrow at leaving, seemed eager to be gone. In the great heart of London, she thought she could hide from the world, and from the gaze of those who had known her in her prosperity. They went away quietly, in the early grey of a November morning, and were far on their journey to the great city before Cwmdare knew they had gone.

Enoch waited, day after day, expecting, as one of Mrs. Wynne's executors, that he should hear from her, but no letter ever came. She was evidently determined that none of her old friends should know of her whereabouts, and in this, had she plunged into the heart of Africa, she could not have succeeded better.

On the Christmas Eve that Harry returned to Cwmdare, Enoch sat all alone, before a cheerful fire, buried in thought. He had succeeded in giving his usual Christmas dole without revealing the name of the giver, and though he had done it, as he mentally declared, to spite himself, yet his act had evidently yielded him considerable pleasure and satisfaction. During the earlier part of the evening he had sat rubbing his hands

with glee, while smiles chased each other across his face, like patches of spring sunshine.

“Shouldn’t I like to see their old faces light up to night,” he said to himself, “when they catch sight of what I have sent them!” and the old man chuckled with evident satisfaction. It was very evident that if he gave to spite himself, it was becoming a very pleasant exercise to him. What at first was as painful as parting with his nerves, was now one of the greatest pleasures of his life, and the danger now lay in the fact that he might discover that he could more successfully spite himself by withholding his gifts than by bestowing his charity. Whatever may have been Enoch Walder’s faults, and he had many, he deserved credit for this, that when he discovered, though comparatively late in life, that he was in danger, as he termed it, of becoming “a mean, selfish old miser,” he set to work deliberately to conquer himself, and never relaxed his efforts until he had won a grand moral victory.

From thinking of the old people who would be gladdened by his charity, his thoughts wandered away up to the Grange, and he wondered where Mrs. Wynne and her children were, and how they fared this cold Christmas Eve. And thinking of Ethel and Douglas, by an easy transition he began to think about Harry, and to wonder what had become of the poor boy.

"I think he must be dead," he said to himself, "or he would have found his way back before this. Whew! how the wind is getting up again, we are going to have another such Christmas Eve as we had three years agone, when the boy was with me, and I dressed him up and sent him around with my dole. Poor lad! he thought I had a slate off. Humph! very likely I have, more likely than not." And the old man stirred up the fire, and sent a cheerful flame roaring up the chimney,

"Bad night to be out," he went on, "it'll blow desperate keen among the hills; but bless me, when I was a young man there was nothing I enjoyed more than being out in a snow storm. Humph! I couldn't stand it now, though."

And the old man shrank farther back into the depths of his great easy chair, and for a long time sat motionless, listening to the wind that roared up the chimney, and shook the tall poplars outside. He must have slept after a while, for he started up at length, and found that the fire was burning low in the grate.

"Nine o'clock!" he said, pulling out his watch. "I must fettle up the fire a bit, for Adam will be across afore he goes to bed, and he'll want a warming," and the old man stirred up the embers till the fire glowed and crackled to his heart's

content. Then he sat down again, while a perplexed look settled upon his face.

"Must have been dreaming, I expect," he mused; "but I heard the garden gate bang as plain as anything; but bless me, nobody will come here to-night but Adam, and he'll come back way."

After a while he jumped up. "I'll take a look out, anyhow," he said, "there can't be any harm in that," and he went to the front door, opened it very cautiously, and peeped out.

"Bless me, how the snow's drifted," he said, looking down on the white heap that lay across the doorway. "'Tain't a drift either," regarding it more closely. "Bless me, now I wonder——" and he began to brush away the snow with his hands. "Why if it ain't a boy; poor lad!" and he threw his arms quickly around the prostrate figure, and carried it into the house, and stretched it on the hearth-rug in front of the glowing fire. "Some beggar child," he said, his eye resting on the tattered shoes, and thin patched clothes. "He's dead though, I fear, poor boy!" and with his wrinkled hand he brushed the brown curls tenderly back from the broad white forehead, and looked down upon the pale pinched face on which the firelight fell. Then he started back. "Good God!" he gasped, "it's Harry. No, it cannot be! Yes, it

is, it is! oh my poor boy!" And the next moment the old man was down on his knees by the side of the prostrate figure, chafing the cold hands, and wailing out, " Oh, my boy, my Harry, my Amy's son; dead! dead! on the threshold of warmth and welcome! Oh, my boy, my boy!"





ENOCH IN A NEW CHARACTER.

CHAPTER XX.

REVELATIONS.

“ Like cliffs which had been rent asunder,
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.”

S. T. COLERIDGE.

AS the reader will suppose, Harry was not dead when Enoch found him, though he was quite unconscious, and remained so during the night. Just as the old man discovered that the boy's heart still throbbed with life, he heard a key grate in the

back door, and Adam's well-known footsteps sounded in the passage. Jumping up with an alacrity altogether new to him, and with his eyes sparkling with the intensity of his excitement, he rushed toward Adam shouting—

“ Go home this minute, thou old slow bones, and fetch Eve. Dost thou hear ? ”

“ Ay ! ay ! ” said Adam, “ but what's a' matter, maaster.”

“ What's that to thee ? ” almost shrieked Enoch.
“ Away with thee this very minute.”

“ I's ow't wrong wi' Ned ? ” said Adam, slowly retreating towards the door.

“ I know nothing about Ned, nor care ! ” said Enoch, glaring at Adam. “ Now go this minute and fetch Eve, or thou'l't rue it.”

Adam did not dare to question his master further, but slamming the door behind him, he rushed down the garden and across the meadows at a rate that was quite unusual to him, muttering to himself, as he kicked the snow about with his heavy boots: “ Bless my body and soul, if that ain't the curiousest old critter that ever I comed across sin' I were 'atched, an' I do believe he gets wus 'an wus as he gets older too. You never know when you 'ave 'im either. At tea time he was as sweet as treacle, an' now if he ain't as crabbed as gooseberry vinegar, I'll eat my Sunday boots.” And having delivered himself of this

soliloquy, he delivered his master's message to Eve, and a few minutes later the worthy couple were at the cottage assisting Enoch in the restoration of our hero.

Before midnight Harry—wrapped in warm blankets—was sleeping soundly in Enoch's bed, while the old man kept loving watch over him, never leaving the bedside for a single minute. It was morning when Harry awoke to consciousness—awoke slowly and by easy gradations. The first thing he became conscious of—and that in a vague, dreamy kind of way—was a delicious sense of rest, and warmth, and comfort. So delicious was the feeling that he was afraid to move, lest it should vanish, as more than one pleasant dream had done. Then he seemed to have a suspicion that something had happened to him; what it was he could not tell, but that it was something pleasant he felt satisfied. By-and-by he began to try to gather up the threads of his past life. Where had he been living lately? What had he been doing? What was that about a journey by rail, and a snow storm? Was it a dream, or was it a reality? Somehow it eluded his grasp. Try as he would he could not arrange his thoughts, they danced and skipped like motes in a sunbeam. Then the soft tones of Christmas bells stole into the room and fell upon his ear. Where was he, he wondered. Everything was so hushed,

and quiet, and restful; only those strains of music, that seemed to come from miles and miles away, broke the stillness. Perhaps he was in another world! Had he died and was now awaking to the music of heaven? Then suddenly all the truth flashed upon him, and he opened his eyes with a start, to encounter Enoch's honest weather-beaten face bending tenderly over him. One look into the old man's eyes was sufficient to assure him that it was all right, and with a low cry he threw up his arms and clasped his old friend about the neck, and Enoch bent down his face upon the pillow close by Harry's, and for a few moments the tears of youth and old age met and mingled.

"Uncle Enoch," was all that Harry said, but to the old man it meant volumes. His heart was too full to speak, so he kept his face upon the pillow with his cheek pressed close to Harry's; and the Christmas bells rang on, swinging out on the cold wintry air, their wild sweet melody speaking to Enoch, and to Harry also, of the song the angels sang, and of the peace and goodwill the Saviour came to bring. Harry was the first to speak.

"I was almost afraid that you would turn me away," he said.

"Turn thee away, lad? Oh no! I have watched and waited for thy coming for many

a day and night, till I had begun to fear that thou wert dead. At first I thought hard things of thee, and almost cursed thee. May the Lord forgive me, but I saw my mistake afterwards.

“ You don’t think now that I ——”

“ Think ? ” quickly interposed Enoch. “ No, boy ; I know thou art honest, I see it in thine eyes, thy mother’s eyes—she lives again in thee.”

“ What do you know of my mother ? ” said Harry, looking up in surprise.

“ I only know that thy mother was my only child, my Amy—the light of my poor old eyes—the sunshine of my home. May God forgive me for treating her as I did ! ”

“ You her father ? ” said Harry, speaking slowly, and looking up with a bewildered expression. “ Oh yes, I see it now. How blind I have been, but you told me her father was dead.”

“ No, lad, I told thee thy grandfather Thorne was dead.”

“ But why did you not tell me this before ? ” said Harry. “ It seems all so strange ! I am not dreaming, am I ? ”

“ No, Harry, thou art wide awake. But I did not want thee to think that thou hadst any claim upon me until I had tested thy character. I wanted to experiment on thee, and more than

that I have never been in the habit of telling people more than I could help. I have always been a close man, God forgive me. If I had been different with my child, my Amy, she might never have left me. But let me tell thee now, while it is on my heart, I neglected her, thy mother, not in the sense that the world calls neglect, but I was no companion for my child, and her mother had gone to heaven. I never opened my heart to her, never shared her childish griefs, and yet I loved her more than I loved my own life—loved her so much that I was afraid I might lose her, for I had permitted that old woman's fable to take possession of me, that if we loved anything of earth too much, God would take it away. Oh, blind that I was, as if it were possible to love a child too much, as if we did not love God all the more that He had made us capable of loving so much what He had given. And fool that I was to think that I loved my child the less because I would not show her how dear she was to me. She thought me cold and hard, and all the while I loved her—oh boy, I cannot tell thee how much—and when she went away it nearly turned my brain. I need not tell thee of the kind of life I have lived since, and how I have mistrusted and almost hated everything and everybody. Oh boy, boy, welcome, welcome to my old heart and home, for thy own

sake, and for the sake of thy dead mother, my Amy, my child. But I thought thou wouldest have come home sooner."

"I could not," said Harry, "I promised my father I would not leave him."

For a moment Enoch recoiled as if something had stung him; then hastily recovering himself, he said: "Yes, yes, I knew I was right. I knew all along that it was he that was dogging thy steps and mine. Why did I not guard thee better? But now thou wilt stay with me, Harry, and never leave me again."

"Oh, no," said Harry, quickly, "I must go back to him to-morrow. I promised him that I would come back."

"Go back!" said Enoch turning pale. "Is he living yet? Did he send thee here?"

"No, no," said Harry, quickly, "he did not send me here, he does not know I have come, I dared not tell him, I dared not have come myself, only—"

"Only what?"

"Only that we were so very poor and I could get no work to do. Oh, we have wanted bread, and clothes to keep us warm."

"Serves thy father right," interposed Enoch, "he deserves to perish of cold and hunger."

"I know not what he deserves," said Harry, "but he is my father, and mammy begged me

when she was dying to be kind to him if ever he came back, and I cannot leave him."

"Cannot, boy? Thou *hast* left him, and thou needs not go back."

"Did I tell you that I had promised to go back?" said Harry, meekly. "And even if I had not it would make no difference. He is helpless now, has been bedridden for six months, and will never get well again. I know he has been wicked, I am afraid his heart is wicked still. But he is my father, and he is suffering, and he has only me to care for him."

"Why hast thou come here, then?" said Enoch, in tones that were almost angry.

"I hardly know," said Harry, blushing and feeling confused, "but want makes us do strange things. I knew we had no claim upon you, I knew my father had been your greatest enemy, and yet something put it into my heart to come, I don't know what. You had been my friend, and I thought perhaps you might—might—I hardly know what I thought, but I hoped that you might help me in some way to get bread for myself and my father."

"And helping you then means helping him, eh, boy?"

"I cannot leave him," was all Harry's answer.

"And I cannot help him, will not help him. How dare you ask it? The man that has robbed

me and would have murdered me! Robbed me, did I say? Yes, robbed me of my child, my happiness and peace of mind, robbed me of my faith in man, and almost of my faith in God. Help the man that has been the curse of my life? Never! If I saw him dying in a ditch, I don't think I would lend a hand to pull him out."

Harry made no reply to this, and for a long time there was silence in the room. Outside the wind made dreary music in the poplars and sighed around the corners of the house. Then the bells that had been silent clanged out again, filling all the wintry air with joyous sounds.

"Will you let me stay here till to-morrow?" said Harry at length. "I don't feel strong enough to undertake the journey back to-day."

"Boy, boy, you sadly try me," said Enoch, with a little shake in his voice; "but you must not think of going back yet, not go back at all."

"Thank you, then I will stay till to-morrow. You have always been good to me, and oh, believe me, I am not ungrateful."

"I never said thou wer't, boy."

"No, no! only I was thinking of your kindness in bringing me in out of the snow. I had tasted nothing since morning, and was quite exhausted."

"Eh, boy, no doubt about it," said Enoch;

"but a little Christmas goose won't come amiss to thee to-day, and I'll soon feed thee up again."

"But I think I shall be all right by to-morrow," went on Harry as if he did not hear the old man's remark; "and may be God will help me to earn bread for myself and father; and if not, we can but die, and in the grave want cannot come."

"Oh, boy, boy, why will you talk so? Do you know such talk is painful to me?"

"I beg your pardon," said Harry, "I will not talk again, and indeed I do not want to talk, for I am very tired." And he closed his eyes and lay listening to the wild music of the bells mingling with the cheery gurgle-gurgle of the brook that still rippled on outside the garden hedge, as if there were no such thing as trouble in the world.

Meanwhile, Enoch paced up and down the room in a state of great agitation. Never in his life before had he been placed in such a dilemma. How could he help the man that had wronged him so? and yet, on the other hand, how could he send his own grandchild out in the world friendless and forsaken? Gladly would he help the boy, but helping him meant helping his father, and the more he thought about it, the more he felt convinced that he could not do it. All the man's evil life came

up before him, all the long catalogue of sins that he had known him commit (and these he felt were not a tithe of the whole) seemed to pass before him in dark array. "The villain!" he hissed, "I feel—oh, God forgive me—I feel that I would rather give him poison than bread."

Then his eye fell upon an illuminated text of Scripture that he had hung upon the wall, just where he might see it the first thing on opening his eyes in the morning, and just now the letters seemed to blaze out in characters of light.

"If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

For a few moments he regarded the text with a fixed and determined expression. Then he turned away, muttering to himself, "If it means that it is all up. I can't do it. I don't want to do it. I can never be His disciple if that's the cross. I may as well give up. I was hoping a bit, but this is too heavy. I can't carry it. I won't try." And he turned on his heel and walked down stairs, leaving Harry all alone.

By noon Harry was able to get down stairs, dressed in one of the suits that he had left behind him when his father dragged him away. He had not outgrown it.

"Bah, boy!" said Enoch, "thou hast grown smaller, these clothes fit thee too much." But

Harry only smiled a sad wintry smile, as the memory of all he had suffered came back to him.

Dinner was a silent meal, notwithstanding the goose was excellent, and the plum pudding all that could be desired. Adam and Eve, who had been invited, it being Christmas, did the best they could to keep up the conversation. But neither Enoch nor Harry was in any mood for talk, each was busy with his own thoughts, and by the expression of their faces they were not of the pleasantest character.

During the forenoon Harry had been impatient to know something about his friends at the Grange, yet, for some reason he could not explain, shrank from asking any questions about them, and as the afternoon wore away he kept expecting every moment that either Ethel or Douglas would call, for he remembered that in the old days they were frequent visitors at the cottage. But the hours of that brief afternoon sped on, and the darkness came down upon the silent hills, but no one came, and, unable longer to restrain his curiosity, Harry turned suddenly to Enoch with the question—

“ Is Douglas at the Grange? ”

But Enoch was so busy with his thoughts, that if he heard he did not heed the question, and Adam answered for him.

“ No, Master Harry, there ain’t nobody at the

Grange, they've all cleared out, every dog and cat on 'em."

"Cleared out?" said Harry, looking up in surprise, "I don't understand."

"No, moas likely you don't, but Maaster 'll explain to 'e better nor I shall."

Thus appealed to Enoch gave Harry a full account of all that had transpired while he had been away.

Harry heard the story in silence, and made no reply when it was ended. His heart was too full to speak, his thoughts too painful for utterance. This then was the coming back to Cwmdare to which he had looked forward with so much eagerness. Oh, how his heart had throbbed at the thought of seeing Douglas again, and feasting his eyes on Ethel's lovely face. In his dreams as well as in his waking hours, he had pictured the meeting, and fondly hoped that Ethel would listen to all he had to tell her about himself, and that they would be friends again. And now she was gone, no one knew where. Gone with Douglas and her mother to fight the world, to bear, perhaps, the pain of poverty and the rebuffs of an unfriendly world. Gone! and taken with her the light and sunshine of Cwmdare. Still, that did not matter, for he was going away again on the morrow, perhaps never to return again. And it might be that in his struggle for

bread he would find his way to London, and they might meet again there. Who could tell? He would not give up hope. There was still something left to brighten life, one star that burned amid the tempests of the sky, and with that star above he would not despair.

Harry asked to be allowed to retire to bed early that evening, as he was very tired, and he wanted to get away about ten o'clock next morning, in order to catch the noon train from Llanvarcwmtrydd.

"Say nothing about going to-morrow," said Enoch, "for I won't hear it. But as it's Christmas Day, and we've none of us been to church or chapel, I think we'd better have reading and prayer."

The chapter he selected was the fifth of St. Matthew, but before he got to the end of it he began to feel uncomfortable, and to wish he had selected some other chapter. The words of the Great Teacher seemed to have a new meaning to-night, and to rebuke him for the way he had spoken to Harry in the morning.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Enoch shut up the book quickly at the close of the chapter, and getting upon his knees, tried to pray, but somehow the words he had been reading kept running through his mind, and it almost seemed as if a voice were whispering in his ear, "Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," over and over again this was repeated, till Enoch felt that he could not make a proper prayer himself, so he commenced the Lord's Prayer. "That always suits a man," he thought, "whatever his needs." Over the first few sentences he got on very smoothly, but when he came to the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive—" there he stuck fast. There was an awkward pause, then Harry said "Amen," and they rose from their knees, not very much comforted—at any rate, Enoch was not.

After Harry had gone to bed, Enoch sat for a long time buried in thought. Jumping up at length, he muttered,

"No, I can't do it, and it's unreasonable for the Lord to expect it. If it had been anybody else in the world I could forgive 'em, take 'em into the house and feed 'em, but that man! Never!"

Not being satisfied, however, in his own mind, he sat down to read the Bible again, being careful not to open at the Gospels this time. He

did not mend matters very much though in opening at the twelfth of Romans. At first it seemed to suit him, and he kept up a running comment as he went on—

“And be not conformed to the world” (I try not to be, and I don’t think I be.)

“Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” (That’s good, I’ve been trying to keep right in that particular.)

“He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.” (Ay, I try to act out that too. In fact, that’s a point with me.)

“Abhor that which is evil.” (That’s good now; that man’s the essence of evil, and I do abhor him, God knows.)

“Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality.” (Good again, I do try to keep up on these points.)

“Bless them that persecute you.” (Oh, hang it.) “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” (Easier said than done.) “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves.” (No, I’ll let him alone, and he’ll get avenged enough.) “Therefore, if thine enemy hunger feed him.” (Oh, bother, I don’t believe Paul ever had a real enemy. I’ll go to bed.) And shutting the book with a bang, he

retired, but not to sleep. All the night through his thoughts troubled him, and when he got up in the morning, he was out of humour with himself and everybody else. "I'm a mean, wretched, selfish, old sinner," was his mental ejaculation, as he came down stairs, "and there ain't one mite of Christianity in me, and I don't believe there ever has been, and I may as well give up thinking about it."

During the morning he did his utmost, notwithstanding his ill humour, to induce Harry to stay with him. He coaxed him, sneered at him, even threatened him, but all to no purpose, Harry was firm.

"I'll make a gentleman of thee," he said, "if thou'l't stay, but that father of thine I never will help."

"Thank you," said Harry, "then I must do the best I can; may be God will help us."

"No! God will never help that father of thine."

"I thought," said Harry, "that God was the friend of sinners."

"Bah! and thou art determined to be a fool?"

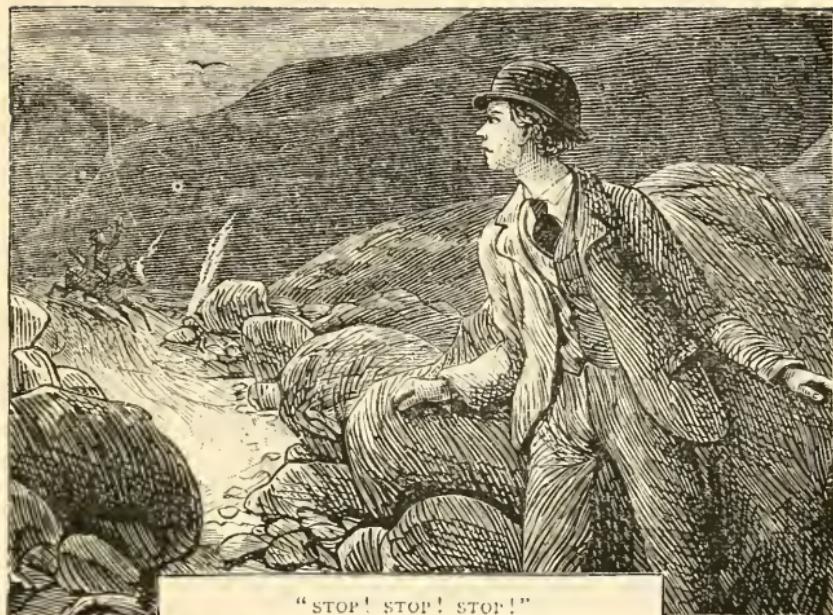
"I must go to my father," was the reply.

"Then go," said Enoch angrily, "and don't expect any help from me until you are willing to forsake that man."

Harry needed no second bidding. Taking up

the little bundle of clothes that once belonged to him, and which Enoch said he might have, he moved toward the door without a word. Enoch watched him for a moment, then turned away his head, and when Harry turned for a last look, the old man was staring vacantly into the fire. Harry tried to say good-bye, but words failed him, and brushing his hand hastily across his eyes, he closed the door softly behind him, and hurried away. He knew not what would become of him, he did not care much. The pleasant dream was ended now. The bright, brief hope had withered, and left him only the ashes of despair.





"STOP! STOP! STOP!"

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW ENOCH FOUND LIBERTY.

"Give us this day our daily bread;
And as we those forgive
Who sin against us, so may we
Forgiving grace receive.
Into temptation lead us not;
From evil set us free;
And Thine the kingdom, Thine the power
And glory ever be." A. JUDSON.



CARCELY had the door closed behind Harry, when Enoch's conscience smote him. He felt that he had done a wicked, cruel thing in allowing the boy, weakened as he was by want and exposure, to go

forth into the cold world alone, to battle with poverty and bear the burden of an invalid father, when he (Enoch) had the power of making life smooth for both.

"But oh, Lord in heaven," he groaned, "what can I do? The boy won't leave his father, and I cannot have that man here, I really cannot."

And Enoch got up and began to pace the room in a state of great agitation.

"If the boy will be a fool, he must take the consequences, as his father has done. I offered him a home, what more could I do?"

But somehow this kind of reasoning did not satisfy him, or give peace to his troubled conscience.

"Suppose he should die," he said. "I know he is weak and ill, and not fit to go a journey alone, and if he were to die, I should be his murderer; but, oh dear, what can I do? He would go, and, do what I would, I could not keep him."

But though he finished up every reflection by trying to excuse himself, he could not satisfy his heart.

"I drove my Amy from her home," he moaned, "and now I have driven her boy. What a wicked, selfish old wretch I am, and yet God knows I wanted both of them to stay."

Then he sat down again, and stared vacantly

into the fire. "I wonder," he said at length, "if there's another poor fellow in the world tormented as I am. Those whom I want to keep won't stay with me, and those whom I could wish were dead without hope of a resurrection, are always forcing themselves upon me. Oh dear, oh dear!"

And again the old man got up and began to pace the room.

"And there's that poor boy—my own Amy's child—gone forth no better than an outcast from my door, when I would give almost anything if I could keep him. God knows how my heart's been hungering for him ever since he's been away, and how glad I was to see him back again, and now he's actually gone. Ay, gone. I wonder why God lets that man live, to be a curse to everybody that comes in contact with him. Oh dear, I wonder why God lets me live, I know I must be dreadfully wicked. Oh God, forgive me." And in a moment there flashed through his mind the words, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you."

For a moment Enoch seemed to writhe in agony, so great was his mental distress.

"Oh, Lord," he cried out, "how can I forgive that man?"

And again the words seemed to sound in his

ears, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you."

"Well," he said at length, "I wouldn't mind so much forgiving him, if that were all, but the boy won't leave him, and I can't help the boy without helping him, and to help that vagabond is more than flesh and blood can stand. Oh, dear, I'd like to dig a grave for him."

And Enoch stopped suddenly in his walk around the room. Was it a voice that spoke to him? Surely he heard the words as distinctly as he ever heard anything in his life, "If thy enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink."

By this time his distress was so great that he fell on his knees before his chair, and clasping his hands together, he cried out in an agony, "Oh, Lord, I can't do it of myself, I really can't. But if thou'l't help me, I'll do anything."

Scarcely had he uttered the words when the answer was given, and the old man sprang to his feet with his face fairly radiant with joy.

If ever a man stepped in a moment from darkness and bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Enoch did. The peace that he had been hungering after for well-nigh forty years was granted to him the moment he had given up everything and made a full surrender of himself to Christ.

"Oh, Lord Jesus," he cried with streaming

eyes, "I've always wanted my own way before, but henceforth I'll go Thy way, for Thy way is best. I see it now; oh, that I had seen it before."

Then rushing to the back door, he espied Adam coming slowly across the meadows towards the cottage.

"Quick, Adam," he shouted, "get Ned saddled this moment. I've found it."

"Found what?" shouted Adam.

"Liberty," replied the old man.

"Oh lor," soliloquised Adam, as he mended his pace, "as sure as Cain an' Abel was in the ark of bulrushes, if he ain't off it again."

"What art thou grumbling about, Adam?" said Enoch, as Adam got nearer the house.

"Now't, maaster, I were only a meditatin' a bit."

"Well, never mind meditating now, my boy, bring Ned round to the gate as quickly as possible, I want to be off without delay."

"Off, eh," mused Adam, as he saddled the mule, "he can't be off much more than he is at present, that's sartin. I wonder what new craze he has in his noddle?" saying which, he led Ned round to the door, where Enoch was already waiting. Climbing into the saddle with an alacrity that quite bewildered Adam to see, the old man was soon galloping through the village

at a headlong rate. The quick clatter of Ned's hoofs brought many a wondering face to door and window, and gathered a crowd of noisy urchins, who seemed to spring from the ground, so sudden was their appearance, and who gave chase, shouting and hallooing at the top of their voices, but Ned and his rider soon left them far in the rear.

Enoch always presented a curious figure astride his mule, the elevated position somehow never added dignity to the old man's appearance, but this morning he looked less dignified than ever. Never had he been known to gallop through the village before; occasionally Ned was permitted to indulge in a canter, but never allowed to go beyond it.

But this morning all that Enoch thought about was overtaking Harry before he reached the station. And no sooner had he got on Ned's back than the beast was given rein. This seemed to suit Ned exactly, for of late he had had more corn than exercise, and seemed glad of the opportunity of having full fling. So on reaching the main road, he put his nose to the ground, gave a loud snort, and started off at a flying gallop. Enoch clapped his hand to his hat and settled it firmly on the back of his head, turned out his toes, sat back in the saddle, stretched out his arms and gave a loud whoop, so great was his

excitement, and so eager his desire to overtake the boy, and away went Ned and Enoch. "A worthy couple," some ill-natured people remarked as they went flying past, Enoch's huge coat laps streaming in the wind. But neither Ned nor his master seemed conscious of anything strange in their behaviour, and soon the gaping villagers who had stared at them so rudely as they passed were left far out of sight.

Meanwhile Harry was trudging wearily along with a very sad heart, and courage all but gone. What he should do on his return to his father he did not know, and how he should repay Mr. Walters what he had borrowed was a problem he could not solve. The dream of his life was ended now. Ethel and Douglas had gone no one knew whither. He had come back to Cwmdare, after an absence of little more than two years, but it was not the Cwmdare he had left. The houses and hills were the same, but those he had hoped most to see were gone.

Is it not often so? We return to the scenes of our youth after an absence of a few years, to find that they can never be the same to us again. The children have grown out of recognition, the aged have returned to dust, while our old companions no more haunt the scenes that once we loved so well; some have gone away to distant towns, or it may be to distant lands, while others

lie sleeping beneath the sod ; and the few who remain, have formed other and closer ties, and we can never be the same to them again.

Harry had reached the point in the road opposite the gap in the hills more than once alluded to in these pages, and was leaning against a huge stone by the wayside to rest a few moments, when he was startled by a loud cry of—

“Stop ! stop ! stop !” which echoed and re-echoed among the hills as if a dozen voices were shouting at the same time.

Instinctively Harry turned, and looked in the direction he had come to behold Ned tearing along at express speed, and Enoch with arms outstretched, and coat flaps flying in the wind, looking in the distance as much like a mounted windmill as anything he could conceive of.

“What is the matter ?” said Harry, when Enoch drew near panting and breathless, and looking far more exhausted than the mule that had galloped all the way from Cwmdare.

“I’ve found liberty,” said Enoch, “and I’ve changed my mind, and it’s all right. Jump up behind, lad, I’ll tell thee all about it as we jog along home. Thy home, boy ; thou must not leave me again, and thou shalt have thy father to live with thee, and maybe we’ll all be happy together yet.”

Harry could scarcely believe his own ears at

first, but Enoch soon convinced him that he was in earnest, and meant all he said.

On the following morning Harry made a second start, but with very different feelings, and with sufficient money in his pocket to repay all that Mr. Walters had advanced him, and bring his father with every possible comfort back to Cwmdare.

"Well, Harry," said his father looking up wistfully, "have you succeeded in getting the situation?"

"Yes," said Harry brightly; "and I have to go at once. So we'll leave this place without any delay, if you think you can bear being moved."

"Oh yes, I can bear anything," was the reply, "if I can only get away from here. I want a change of scene, for I'm tired of counting the cracks in the walls of this room."

"Then we'll start to-morrow," said Harry, "for I'm as tired of this place as you can be."

So on the following day they started. It was a work of no small difficulty, however, to take such a helpless invalid so long a journey, especially as Harry was anxious to keep from his father the name of the place to which he was being taken. He had instructions, however, to spare no expense, and to use every precaution for his father's comfort. Mr. Walters kindly offered to

accompany them on their journey, an offer Harry gladly accepted. A through carriage was secured, which considerably lightened the difficulties of the railway journey, and for a consideration the porter at Llanvarcwmtrydd refrained from shouting that jawbreaking name, as was his wont, on the arrival of their train. The weather was very cold, so the head of the invalid was carefully wrapped up while he was removed from the train to the carriage in waiting. But even if that precaution had not been necessary, he was too much exhausted to have noticed anything around him.

For two or three days after, his life seemed to be in some danger, and the doctor ordered the most absolute quiet, and food of the most nourishing kind to be given him regularly. For two days he never spoke, and manifested no interest in anything; then he began to rally again, and in about a week he was almost as well as he could ever hope to be in this world.

Enoch kept out of his sight, but seemed very anxious nevertheless about the invalid's comfort, and insisted to Harry that a nurse must be got, whose special business should be to wait on his father.

"Dost thou know any kind old woman that would make a good nurse, and be willing to come? Eh, lad?"

"No, I don't think I do," said Harry. "Yes, I do, though; there's Mrs. Porter, who was so kind to mammy and me, if she would come she would do splendidly."

"Then write to her at once, boy, there's no time to be wasted."

The following day Mrs. Porter might have been seen running to every house in Primrose Square, with an open letter in her hand, laughing and crying at intervals, and declaring that she knew something was going to happen, as she had been dreaming about Wales three nights in succession. The poor old lady was delighted to hear from Harry, for she had often wondered what had become of the lad, and had often prayed for his safety. She was not long in deciding to leave Primrose Square. She had often longed to visit Wales again, and enjoy the pure air that blew fresh and cool among the glorious hills, but she had never been able to find the means. Now, however, when the opportunity was given, she could not refuse it, and a letter was sent to say she would come.

The day before her arrival, Owen Thorne startled Harry with the question, spoken in a sharp, abrupt manner,—

"Boy, where am I? I don't understand this at all, you seem to do nothing, and yet you are able to provide me with everything I want."

“Where do you think you are, father ?”

“How should I know ?” he answered with an oath. “I know I’m in the country somewhere, it’s so quiet. But where am I? Let’s have none of your mystery.”

“Well, father, you’re at Cwmdare.”

Had an earthquake opened at his feet he could not have been more astonished. For several seconds he was quite unable to speak; then he gasped out,—

“Boy, you lie !”

“I do not, father. Grandfather Walder has kindly given us both a home.”

“What!” he shrieked, “am I in *his* house? Boy, I’ll kill thee if I can get nigh thee,” and for the next half hour he swore and raved in the most shocking manner, till, utterly exhausted, he lay back gasping for breath.

“You would not go to the workhouse,” said Harry, when at length he was able to gain a hearing; “and I did not feel disposed to starve when a good home was offered.”

“Then thou hast found out that he’s thy grandfather ?” he gasped.

“Yes,” said Harry. “And he has freely forgiven you all the wrong you have done him.”

“Forgiven!” he hissed, growing livid with rage. “But I have not forgiven him. That man insulted me years ago, as I was never insulted

before ; slandered me, when my character was the only possession I had ; refused me help at a time when a little help would have been a fortune to me.”

“Then, if he has wronged you,” said Harry, “he is atoning for it by helping you now. Forgive him, if you think he has done you wrong. Let bygones be bygones, father ;” saying which Harry left the room.

For a whole month after Owen Thorne sulked. Mrs. Porter was the only person to whom he would vouchsafe a word ; as for Harry he would not even look at him, and if Harry spoke to him he would not reply.

“Never mind,” said Enoch, “he will come round in time.” And Enoch was right. Long before the summer ended, he was able to be wheeled out in a bath chair, and many an hour, in the shade of the poplars, the two men sat side by side chatting away as pleasantly as though they had been friends all their lives.

Harry was at school again, pursuing the studies he had so abruptly relinquished ; while a London artist not unknown to fame, who came to Cwmdare on a sketching tour, took quite a fancy to him, and gave him many a valuable hint relative to the mixing and laying on of colours.

So time rolled on, and Harry made rapid progress in his studies, and grew in mind and body.

The one drawback to his happiness was the absence of Douglas and Ethel ; but he got reconciled in time, though he never forgot them, and never gave up the hope that sooner or later he should meet them again.





DUGLAS WYNNE AND HARRY.

CHAPTER XXII.

FOUR YEARS LATER.

"By trifles, in our common ways,
Our characters are slowly piled;
We lose not all our yesterdays;
The man hath something of the child;
Part of the past to all the present cleaves,
As the rose-odours linger in fading leaves."

W. M. PUNSHON.



HAT yet remains to be told of this story will have to be sketched rapidly, and we must pass over a period of four years with only the briefest glance at their flight. Harry had shot up into a man, and

the prediction of Enoch, on his return to Cwm-dare that he would be a dwarf, was certain now never to be verified. Owen Thorne was still a cripple, though good nursing, fresh air, and abundance of nutritious food, had produced a great change in him, and he was not nearly so helpless as on his arrival at Cwmdare. The unceasing kindness of his friends had also its effect upon him, and though the good seed cautiously sown and carefully cultivated by Enoch and Mrs. Porter was long in bearing fruit, yet it was not lost. He said little, and yet it was evident as the years rolled on that a change was slowly coming over his spirit. The fits of passion and of dejection were fewer and less violent, and there were times when he seemed perfectly resigned and even happy. The punishment that he had brought upon himself was evidently working out its divine mission, and he began to see in time that there was nothing vindictive in God's treatment of the wicked—that if they suffered, their sufferings were what they brought upon themselves; their punishment self-inflicted. He had never studied theology in his life, and yet, as he lay in his bed week after week, or reclined in his bath chair in the warm summer days, the idea grew upon him somehow that wicked people made their own hell. He had heard people say in years gone by that God was too merciful and

good to punish the sinner, and he had grasped at the idea as drowning men will grasp a straw, but he was learning now that there was no necessity that God should punish them, because they punished themselves; that sin was its own avenger, that suffering and hell grew out of evil, as the blade grows out of the grain. He was learning something of the great law of retribution while in this school of affliction, and if people reaped what they sowed, it seemed to him only just and right.

He had scoffed at the idea of hell in years gone by, but he did not scoff at it now. The wicked made a hell for themselves in this world, there could be no doubt of that. His own life had been a continual torment, and he saw plainly enough that perpetual sin meant perpetual misery—that hell and heaven were the harvests of men's doings.

He had not said as yet that he was thankful for his punishment, and yet the mercy of justice was slowly dawning upon him, and he was beginning to see that the punishment of sin was not simply for the torment of the sinner, that it had a diviner mission than that, which was nothing less than the moral good of the offender; that while our earthly fathers might "chastise us after their own pleasure," yet the great Father in Heaven took higher ground, and "chastened

us for our *profit.*" And if that was the mission of punishment here, he began to wonder if punishment had any mission or moral purpose hereafter. Was hell to remain for ever a black, foul spot on God's bright, fair universe, where evil men should grow worse, and hate with an intenser hatred the great Father who loved them, and defy His authority and law for ever and ever; or was it a great school of discipline, where the fires that sin had kindled should burn up the dross, and purge the metal from every particle of alloy, till the great Refiner who sat above it should see again the reflection of His own image, and the soul that had been salted by fire should behold in hell the reflection of the mercy of Heaven, and bless the tongues of flame that had burnt out the evil and given the good another chance? The same questions have presented themselves to wiser and better men than Owen Thorne, and who shall give an authoritative answer? This much, however, we do know, that "The Judge of all the earth will do right."

Enoch Walder in his old years was a model of Christian meekness and charity. The old cynical spirit seemed now to have passed away for ever. He had discovered that it was no less blessed to forgive than to be forgiven. The struggle with him had been a severe one, but the victory had

brought its own reward of blessedness and peace. Having found himself at peace with all men, he found himself at the same time at peace with God.

Adam and Eve still superintended Enoch's small farm, though the latter had much less to do at the cottage since Mrs. Porter had been installed as Owen Thorne's nurse, for which she was sincerely grateful.

"Indeed an' I'm not as young as I was twenty years ago," she would say, "an' I'm glad to rest my poor old bones a bit, indeed I am."

Eve and Mrs. Porter soon became great friends, and when they met at the cottage, English for the time being was given to the winds, and in their much-loved native tongue they would discourse by the hour, unless some imperative duty should put an end to their conversation.

Harry was in London pursuing his favourite study, working hard and earnestly to win his way in the world. Enoch had hoped on his return to Cwmdare that his early passion for painting had vanished; but he was soon undeceived in that matter, the passion had grown and intensified with the flight of years; and the old man soon saw that the boy would never settle down to any kind of business, and that he had better be allowed to cultivate the art for which nature had evidently intended him.

At the time to which we refer he had been in London about eight months, carrying on his studies chiefly under the direction of Mr. Brownfield, his artist friend whom he had met at Cwmdare, but spending the greater portion of his time at Kensington, or in the National Gallery. The art treasures collected in these buildings seemed to open up a new world to Harry, and for a while he seemed to live and move in a dream—a dream so bewitching and delicious that he frequently wondered whether, sooner or later, he would not wake up and find all those glorious treasures melted and vanished for ever. The novelty, however, wore off in time, and he became satisfied that those master paintings, before which he would sometimes stand for hours, were grandly real, and not the creations of a frenzied brain.

At first he was greatly discouraged, and he would sometimes turn sadly away from some great picture that he had been contemplating, and mutter to himself, “I shall never make a painter.” But that feeling also wore away in time, and the very opposite effect was produced, and he would murmur to himself, “If I cannot paint like that, I will get as near to it as possible. I may never reach the top of the mountain, but I’m determined not to die at the bottom.”

Not wishing to be wholly dependent upon his grandfather, he made one or two very successful

copies of well-known pictures, and sold them for what he could get. Yet, somehow, copying other men's works was never congenial to his nature, and he longed for the day to come when he would appear before the world, not as a copyist, but as a master hand.

One evening in August Harry had been invited to meet a number of art students and amateur painters at the house of one of the brotherhood of painters in Finsbury. He had been once before in company with Mr. Brownfield, and was glad of the opportunity of going again, especially as he was likely to meet with several very successful students whose acquaintance he was wishful to make.

As Harry had anticipated, the evening was a most enjoyable one, and the hours slipped away almost imperceptibly. He knew that it was after midnight when he left, but he had not troubled himself much about the time, and he never thought of looking at his watch. It was a splendid night, or rather morning, and he thought he would enjoy his three or four miles walk to Walworth, in which neighbourhood he had lodgings. So after some hearty "good nights" had been spoken, he hurried away at a sharp pace. He had intended, when he started, to go by way of Southwark Bridge, but changed his mind as he came along Moorgate Street, and

decided to go by way of London Bridge. The streets were almost deserted. Never since he had been in London had he known the City so still—in fact, he had long since come to the conclusion that London was never still, that the roar was incessant night and day. He was not quite certain that it was not so yet, only the comparative silence of the present hour seemed like the hush of death, after the noise and tumult of the day. It sounded so strange to hear the echo of his footfalls as he hurried along, or the rattle of a cab along Fleet Street, or Holborn, or farther away still. While he was coming down King William Street the big bell of St. Paul's struck two; slowly and solemnly the notes rang out over the almost deserted City, and wailed away in the distance, almost like a cry of pain.

He slackened his pace a little when he reached the bridge, and repeated to himself Wordsworth's well-known lines—

" Ne'er saw I, never felt a calm so deep,
 The river glideth at its own sweet will;
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep,
 And all that mighty heart is lying still."

Just then he noticed a man in one of the embayments of the bridge, leaning over the parapet, and apparently unconscious of everything that was passing around him. He might be dead, so

still was he. Harry was about to pass on, but something in the figure, upon which the light from a lamp fell, attracted him irresistibly, and compelled him to look at the man more closely. It was not the figure of an old man, that was very evident, though the clothes hung loosely about him, as though they had been intended originally for someone much stouter. The position, or poise of the man, too, was not without grace, and his clothes, though patched and worn, had evidently been made the most of. It was evident also, that he did not know he was an object of attention, for he uttered a loud groan at length, and muttered something about "sleeping for ever;" the exact words Harry could not catch.

"Poor fellow!" thought Harry, "he seems in great trouble, I've half a mind to speak to him."

Just then the man made a movement as if he were about to climb over the parapet, and Harry instantly stepped towards him, and placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"My dear friend," he said, "you seem to be in great trouble of some kind."

With a savage scowl the man turned upon him. "And what business is that of yours?" he said.

For a few seconds Harry seemed unable to reply, there was something in the tones of the voice that startled him, and reminded him of

something long forgotten; and in the face too, upon which the light fell full, there seemed familiar lines. "I have seen the face in a picture, somewhere," he thought, "the man has been an artist's model." Then he spoke aloud—

"Certainly I have no business to interfere with you, only as you seemed in trouble I could not resist the impulse that prompted me to speak."

"And what do you want with me?" he said, with an oath.

"When I saw you in trouble I thought I would like to help you if I could," said Harry, "and if it is in my power to help you, I shall be glad to do so now."

"Help!" sneered the man. "Well, it's refreshing to hear someone talk in that way. But who are you? I feel quite an interest in a gentleman that takes such an interest in me!" and the man laughed a low, derisive laugh.

"I am afraid that you will not be much the better for knowing that I am an artist," said Harry, "or rather that I am trying to become one, and that my name is Harry Thorne."

"What!" said the young man, stepping towards him, and staring with bleared eyes full in Harry's face. "You Harry Thorne? Well I'm —" and he stopped suddenly short with a muttered oath.

"I think you must be making a mistake," said Harry, "you cannot possibly know me."

"No," said the man, fiercely, "I'm not mistaken, you saved me from drowning once, and I don't thank you for it, I wish you had let me drown. I was thinking when you came up of trying it again."

"Saved you from drowning!" said Harry, in utter astonishment, "surely you cannot be——"

"Yes, I am," said the man, quickly, "I'm Douglas Wynne, or all that's left of him."

For a few moments the two young men stood staring into each other's eyes in silence, and in those moments they seemed to live their life over again. All that was, and all that might have been, seemed to pass before their mental vision. Harry was the first to speak.

"Give me your hand, Douglas," he said, "I am so glad to meet you; but, oh, so grieved to find you thus."

"You needn't grieve," he said; "I've given up grieving long since, but if you'll give me a pipe of tobacco or a cigar, for old acquaintance sake, I'd be obliged, it might stay the hunger a bit against morning."

"I have neither, Douglas, but go with me, and I will give you food and a bed."

"No, Harry, I've been a curse to all my friends, and I'll not be a burden to you. You've

gone up, I see, I've gone down," and he swore a bitter oath ; " but if you'll give me threepence to get a pint, as soon as the pubs open, I'll go my way, and you can forget you ever saw me."

" Forget you, Douglas ? Never ! and I tell you you must come home with me—I insist upon it."

" You'd better let me go my way," said Douglas ; " I only came out of prison this morning."

" Prison !" said Harry, in astonishment.

" Ay, prison ; and if you hadn't come up, I should have been in hell by this ! "

" Please, Douglas, do not speak in that way," said Harry.

" Do you object to a man speaking the truth ? A few days earlier or later cannot much matter, I'm bound to go there."

" No ! no !" said Harry, " you'll be a man yet, Douglas, that we shall all be proud of," and he linked his arm in that of the other, and the two walked away together.

" You'll regret taking notice of me," said Douglas, as they walked rapidly along, " but I can't resist you, I can't resist anybody. If it were an old pal taking me somewhere to commit a robbery it would be all the same, I should go with no more resistance than I am displaying now."

"And you were our leader," said Harry, "when we were at school together."

"Ay, I suppose so," he said, with a touch of sadness in his voice. "I was more of a man when I was fifteen than I am now, and I shall be twenty-one the day after to-morrow."

"Don't be downhearted," said Harry, "I am going to help you to start afresh."

"Don't deceive yourself," was the reply, "I have neither the will nor the wish to be better. I've sold myself to the devil, body and soul, and I am going to him as soon as possible."

Harry made no reply to this, and the two walked on in silence, until they reached Harry's lodgings. Opening the door with a latch-key, he took Douglas by the hand, and led him into the house, and in a few minutes had set food before him, and a jug of milk. Douglas ate ravenously and in silence, and drank the milk with evident relish.

Harry stood watching him with a strange look upon his face, a look of mingled pain and pleasure; pleasure at having found his early friend, pain at finding him such a wreck. He could not help thinking of the happy home, and the days they had spent together, in the woods, and on the hills around Cwmdare, and how they used to talk about the future, with Ethel for a listener, and paint it with such glowing hues

He remembered how ambitious Douglas was in his young days, and how brave and manly he was in all his deportment. Alas! what a change had come over him. It almost seemed as if the bright, brave, chivalrous spirit of the Douglas he had known six or seven years ago had taken its flight, and another spirit had taken possession of the body—a spirit that lacked all those qualities that he had been in the habit of associating with his early friend. The body was the same, though even that was greatly changed. The firm, elastic step was gone, a wild look had taken the place of the merry glitter in his eyes, the face was haggard and old-looking; he might have passed for thirty anywhere, his hands were unsteady, and there was a stoop in his shoulders, that seemed out of place in one so young. Yet that this was Douglas there could be no doubt. “The voice was Jacob’s voice, though the hands were the hands of Esau.”

“Now, Douglas, you must obey me to-night,” said Harry; “come this way!” and without a word Douglas followed him up-stairs. “You will sleep there,” said Harry, pointing to his own bed, “and in the morning you will put on these clothes,” and he placed a change of linen and one of his own suits on a chair, “and to-morrow we will talk together; I want to hear about your mother, and about your sister Ethel,

but it's not the time for talk now; but you must take me to see them, and let us spend your birthday together, and you must start afresh, and play the man. Resolve, by the help of God, to redeem the past, and make the future bright with earnest endeavour and noble work. Good night, Douglas, and may God watch over you."





DOUGLAS WYNNE'S SAD END.

xx

CHAPTER XXIII.

DARKNESS.

"O yet we *trust* that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood :
That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

TENNYSON.



EXT morning, as soon as Harry heard Douglas stirring he went into his room, and helped him with his toilet, and then led him downstairs into his little sitting-room, where an appetising breakfast

was awaiting them. Very little was said during breakfast, but as soon as the cloth was removed Harry said, "Now, Douglas, make yourself comfortable on the sofa, and let's have a little serious talk ; but first I want to ask a few questions, which I hope you will answer."

"Fire away," said Douglas, moodily.

"Well, first and foremost, where are your mother and sister ?"

"Don't know," was the curt reply.

"Don't know ?" echoed Harry in astonishment.

"No, sir, I don't know ; haven't the remotest idea, in fact."

"You surprise me."

"I dare say I do."

"But have you no clue to their whereabouts ?"

"None whatever, nor they to mine, I'm thankful to say."

"Are they still in London ?"

"How should I know ?" he said, savagely. "Did I not tell you that I had not the remotest idea where they were ?"

"Yes ! but I thought you would have known whether they were still in London."

"Well, I don't. I haven't seen them for two years, and never expect to see them again."

"Nonsense, Douglas. But where were they the last time you saw them ?"

" You seem mighty curious," was the reply ; " haven't you got over your boyish love for Ethel yet ? "

This was an answer Harry had not expected, and for a moment he felt confused, and blushed deeply.

" Bah ! " said Douglas, noticing his confusion. " You needn't hope for anything in that direction. Ethel has grown into a remarkably handsome woman, and I expect she's married before this, for I know a lot of fellows that wanted her." This speech was garnished with so many oaths that Harry felt shocked, and for several minutes there was silence in the room. At length Harry said —

" But you have not answered my question yet, Douglas."

" Well, yes, they were living out Hoxton way the last time I saw anything of them. But——" and he swore again—" I don't mind telling you all about it ; as you are in the religious line it may come in handy to point a moral with."

" Thank you," said Harry, not heeding the sneer, " go on with it."

" Well, you know my father was a drunkard, don't you ? "

Harry nodded.

" Well, I owe most of my prosperity in life to him. He made me drink when I was a child, and

laughed and clapped me on the back and called me a fine fellow when I could toss off a glass of wine at a single gulp. Well, I got to like it, and used to help myself pretty freely before I went to Rugby. There I got in with a fastish set. I can't tell you all, but I tried to master myself, I did really; for I was ambitious then. I wanted to make my mark in the world, but when father got killed, and I found that we were all in poverty, I gave up; I thought we were all disgraced, and I tried to forget the humiliation in drink. Then mother took Sis and me to this vile city; she might as well have taken me to hell at the first. But she did it for the best, no doubt. I was placed in Uncle Sam's office, and had good hopes held out to me, but I hated work and loved drink. Well, to make a long story short, I soon got into queer street, for I picked up with a lot of fellows who professed all sorts of good things, and I was fool enough to believe them; raw from the country I could not believe that such villainy tould exist in the hearts of men. I won at the gaming table at the first; they let me do that, and then, of course, when they'd got me fast, why I lost everything I had, and more than belonged to me. So when Uncle Sam found that his books had been tampered with, I was dismissed. Of course mother stuck to me until I had squandered all her bit of fortune, and would

have stuck to me after, but I was nabbed, and maintained at the country's expense for three months, and when I got out I found that mother and Sis had shifted their quarters; I suppose they were hard up, and had to go in for cheaper rooms somewhere. Well, I've never seen them since. I've been caught twice since, and prison life is getting monotonous. Fact is, this world is played out, and I intend trying what the next is like."

"Nonsense, Douglas, you must start afresh, and play the man."

"Start afresh!" and he laughed a bitter laugh.
"Ay, that's a good idea. You're right, old boy, I'll start afresh; I was about to do it when you came up last night."

"Oh, Douglas, Douglas!" said Harry, "don't talk in that wild way."

"What's the odds?" he said savagely. "I can't live here without drink, and I've no money to get it; and between you and me, I think I've had about enough of the accursed stuff. It's cursed the whole lot of us. Father, mother, Ethel, and me. I am a bit sorry for mother and Sis, for I know they've to work like slaves to get enough to keep body and soul together, and if it hadn't been for the drink, why you see they would have been ladies."

"Now you're talking sensibly, Douglas."

"Am I? Well then I'll stop, or I shall begin to ramble again."

After dinner he stretched himself on the sofa, and pretended to go to sleep, and Harry, taking advantage of his sleep, put on his hat and went out to attend to a few matters of business that could not very well be delayed.

He was only absent about an hour, and when he returned Douglas was missing. He was not much concerned about this at first, thinking very likely that he had only gone out for a walk, but on going to his bedroom he discovered that a valuable scarf-pin was missing, and one or two other articles of more or less value had also disappeared. "Could it be possible," he thought, "that Douglas had actually robbed him? Could he really have fallen so low?"

During the remainder of the afternoon Harry was engaged in a diligent search among the public-houses of the neighbourhood, but without avail. As evening came on, he secured the services of a private detective, who, having at length got a clue, followed it up with great skill, and about three o'clock in the morning he returned in a cab to Harry's lodgings, with Douglas, who was in a state of drunken frenzy. After some difficulty he was got to bed, and soon after fell asleep, and Harry, having paid and dismissed the detective, sat down by the bedside to watch the sleeper.

Soon after daylight he awoke, and stared wildly around him for a few moments; then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he burst out—

“So you’ve found me and brought me back, eh? That’s foolish, you needn’t try to reform me, I’m past that. It was rather mean of me to repay your kindness by stealing your property, but I couldn’t help it. I was so thirsty, that I was bound to get a drink by hook or by crook; but you’ll find the pawn-tickets in the waistcoat pocket.”

“Douglas,” said Harry, sadly, “do you know this is your birthday? You are of age to-day; now do resolve that you will do better. Begin again to-day, make a fresh start, and ask God to help you. Promise me that you will.”

“Well, I’ll think about it,” was the reply.

“Thinking is not enough,” said Harry. “Be resolved that, by the help of God, you will be a man.”

“It’s too late, Harry.”

“Nonsense, Douglas, a young man of twenty-one talking about its being too late. Think about the past, and about the bright future we used to picture to ourselves.”

“Well! you pray for me, Harry, while I start afresh, that I may be able to succeed. But my head aches. Would you mind drawing the blind,

and then leaving me a bit; I think I will go to sleep again."

Thankful that he was in a better frame of mind, Harry drew the blind and then quietly left the room, closing the door behind him. About noon he went up and opened the door cautiously and took a peep into the room, but Douglas still slept on, apparently in precisely the same position as when he left the room. About two Harry went up again, and still he remained in precisely the same position, to all appearance soundly asleep. Not wishing to disturb him, Harry retraced his steps and waited another hour, then getting uneasy at hearing no movement in the room above, he went boldly into the room and up to the side of the bed. One look at the face of the sleeper was sufficient. He slept so soundly that he would never wake again.

As soon as Harry had drawn the blind and left the room, he had secured a clasp knife that was lying on the dressing table, and getting into bed again he lay down and stabbed himself to the heart. A doctor was fetched, but Douglas was quite dead. It was a strange way of keeping his birthday, and as Harry looked down upon the white face, he remembered Douglas's last words to him, and oh what a mockery they seemed—

"Pray for me, Harry, while I start afresh, that I may succeed."

"This then was the ending of the brief day, whose morning had been so full of promise." And Harry turned away his head and wept.

The next day, after the inquest, Harry remained a long time alone in the room where Douglas lay asleep in his coffin. The pinched, haggard look had passed away from the face, and the bloated, sensual expression about the mouth had given place to a smile like that he used to wear; his eyes were closed, the long silken lashes touching the cheek. The brown curls were brushed carelessly back from the broad white forehead, and every trace of pain had fled. He looked in death—except for the deathly pallor—like the Douglas of old, and as Harry gazed upon the still white face, and thought of all that might have been, of all the glorious possibilities that once were his, of the happy days they had spent together, and of the hopes that had never blossomed into full fruition—he could not help shedding bitter, scalding tears of sorrow and regret. And, kneeling there by the coffin, he thanked God that he had been able to keep the promise made to his dying mother, and registered a fresh vow that, God helping him, he would never touch or taste that which had destroyed his

friend and had darkened for so many years his own path of life.

Rising from his knees, he looked again long and tenderly upon the dead face.

"What a pity," he said regretfully, "that his mother and Ethel cannot see him ere the grave claims him for ever. Poor Douglas! Ah well, ah well. Perhaps it is better they should never know," and he turned away and left the room, but as he made his way slowly down the stairs a snatch of an old song that he heard in the streets came back to him and repeated itself over and over again—

" Let me kiss him for his mother
Ere you lay him with the dead."

Turning round suddenly when he reached the foot of the stairs, he retraced his steps to the room where Douglas lay.

"Yes, Douglas," he murmured, "I will kiss thee for thy mother, and for thy sister Ethel. And if I never see them again to tell them, yet it will be a satisfaction to me." And bending over the coffin he kissed the white, cold brow, then hastily left the room lest his emotion should overcome him. The next day they laid Douglas in the grave. The once bright, brave, noble Douglas. The father's hope, the sister's pride, the mother's joy. Harry was the only mourner, and when the grave had closed over his early

friend, he turned sadly away and went home. But he could not settle to work again. His nerves seemed completely unstrung. So, after a few ineffectual attempts, he gave up his lodgings and returned to Cwmdare. Of course Enoch was delighted to see him, and poor old Mrs. Porter went into ecstacies. Even the dull face of Owen Thorne lit up with smiles, while poor old Adam astonished the cows by the vehemence of his soliloquies. Harry was as pleased as any of them to be among his old friends once more, and the wild romantic scenery after such a wilderness of bricks and mortar as London, seemed to fire his imagination afresh, while the fresh bracing air from the mountains, brought back again the colour to his cheeks and helped him to recover from the shock Douglas's tragic end had given him.

The only danger he ran was of being made vain, for the men of the village were never tired of praising his genius, nor the women his beauty; but his sound common sense came to his rescue, and he ran the gauntlet without receiving the smallest harm.

Harry remained at Cwmdare nearly a year, working hard and earnestly, and in his work he had not a truer helper than his father. Owen Thorne would be carried each day into the room that Harry used as his studio, and would watch

with eager delight the progress of his pictures, making suggestions now and then, showing how true an artist was this wrecked and ruined man.

Harry loved to have his father near him now, and daily he thanked God that he had been enabled to stand by him in the days of his folly and wickedness—thanked God that a better spirit had taken possession of him, that the power of kindness was being made manifest in his life, and that the affliction he had brought upon himself was yielding the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

All misunderstanding between Owen Thorne and Enoch had been smoothed away. Owen had confessed to the evil he had intended doing the old man, and had received forgiveness, and there was a hope now that the clouded day of this man's life would have a bright sunset, and that the earnest prayers of pious parents and a noble wife would be answered at last in the prodigal's salvation.

Harry found a ready sale for his pictures, for he was already getting famous in the Principality and in some of the border counties as well, and day by day his path to fame seemed brighter and more clearly defined. And yet he was not altogether satisfied. The foreground of every picture, of every landscape, of every nook and glen, that he sketched lacked something, and

that something was Ethel. He could not help it. She had often been his companion, when first the beauties of Cwmdare dawned upon him. She had given him his first lessons in perspective, she had encouraged him when he was down-hearted, she had been his inspiration again and again, she had been his hope during the long years of his exile and poverty. In short, she had taken such a hold upon his imagination, that he could not forget her, try as he would. Every hill, and wood, and meadow, and stream about Cwmdare reminded him of her, and he kept wondering all the while what had become of her, and how she fared in life.

"I can't stay here," he said, at length, "I'll go away;" and the next week he started for the continent—for he could afford it now. The quaint old city of Antwerp was the first place he visited. He wanted to study Rubens and Van Dyk at their best. "Antwerp is full of Rubens," he wrote home, "the place seems steeped and saturated with his spirit." He took up his abode, while he stayed, at the Hôtel de l'Europe, in the Place Verte, and each morning he awoke to the music of the cathedral bells, floating down from the lofty spire on the stagnant air of the quaint old city, like harmonies from a happier land. For the first week he went every day to the cathedral to gaze upon Rubens' world-famed

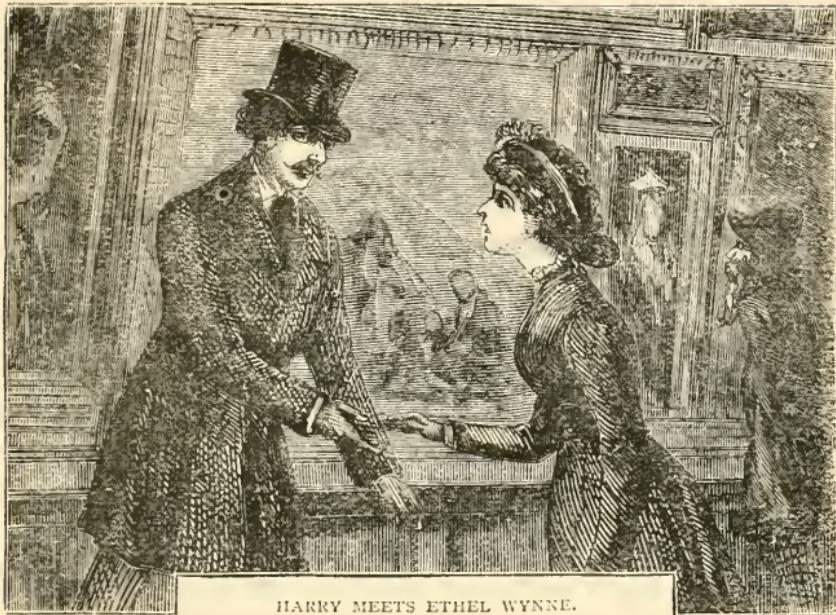
masterpieces, the “Descent from the Cross” and the “Elevation of the Cross,” and then on to the Museum in the Rue Bagot, or to one of the churches, the church of St. Jacques having for him the greatest attractions. Harry was delighted with Antwerp—so quaint, so full of art and beauty, that he was loth to leave it.

From Antwerp he went on to that miniature Paris, Brussels. What he wanted to see most were the pictures of the famous Wiertz. “They are strange productions,” he wrote home. “It is said Wiertz died a raving maniac, and I do not wonder at it. The conceptions of many of his pictures seem more like the conceptions of a madman than of a man in his senses, but the execution and colouring are marvellous.”

From Brussels he went on to study the art treasures collected in the fair city of Paris, and from Paris he returned again to Cwmdare. He had scarcely rested from the fatigue of his journey, before he set to work again in sober earnest, as if his tour on the continent had given him a new inspiration. His ambition now was to get a picture admitted into the Royal Academy, and to this end he laboured with all the earnestness and enthusiasm of which he was capable. He did not succeed, however, that year, but nothing daunted, he tried again; and the year following his hope was realised. It was a proud

day for Harry when he saw his “Sunshine,” as he had named the picture, hung below the line, and in a conspicuous place. One of the bright dreams of his life was realised at last, one of his hopes had bloomed into certainty ; but the other hope of his life, the brightest of all, seemed to recede farther and farther with gathering years—the “Sunshine” that he had hoped for was still obscured.





HARRY MEETS ETHEL WYNNE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SUNSHINE.

"The pure, the bright, the beautiful,
That stirred our hearts in youth ;
The impulse of a wordless prayer,
The dream of love and truth,
The longings after something lost,
The spirit's yearning cry,
The strivings after better hopes ;
These things shall never die."—DICKENS.

TN a little back parlour of a small house in Islington, poorly furnished though scrupulously neat and clean, and bearing many evidences of taste and refinement, notwithstanding the faded carpet and cur-

tain, and furniture that had long since seen its best, two ladies sat down to a breakfast of tea and dry toast. There was butter on the table, but they scarcely touched it, for butter was a luxury they could ill afford.

Yet as you looked at them you felt that they must have seen better days. There was an air of refinement about them, and about all their movements, that poverty and their dingy surroundings could not take away.

The elder of the two, if not quite an invalid, seemed in delicate health, her face was very pale and worn, and her hair was as white as wool, while about her mouth there were lines that spoke of trouble, and of heart-wounds that time had not yet healed.

The younger lady anyone would have judged as the daughter of the elder, for between the two there was a striking resemblance. Yet in some respects they were very much unlike each other. The mother had a sad, careworn expression, and spoke in plaintive tones. The daughter was bright, vivacious, hopeful, and when she spoke her voice sounded like music.

Breakfast over the daughter pushed back her chair, and took up a piece of an old newspaper that had come wrapped around some groceries the previous evening, and began carefully to smooth out its creases; she seemed to have no

particular object in doing this, only it wanted half an hour yet of the time of her setting out to her daily work, and she had got into the habit of reading anything and everything that came in her way whenever she had a few minutes to spare. Having smoothed out the creases to her satisfaction she began to read, while the mother sat with clasped hands looking wistfully into vacancy ; evidently her thoughts were far away from the narrow room in which she dwelt, perhaps far back in some happy time that had passed away for ever, for she heaved a great sigh at length, unclasped her hands, and turned and looked towards her daughter.

“Have you found something very interesting, Ethel ?” she said, in low, plaintive tones.

“Yes, ma,” answered the young lady without looking up. “I’m both interested and puzzled.”

“Indeed!” the mother replied, though without seeming to evince much curiosity in the matter.

“It’s an article,” went on the young lady, “or rather a critique, on some of the pictures at the Royal Academy. Oh, I should so like to see them.”

“We can’t afford it,” said the mother, “so it is of no use wishing.”

Without heeding this last remark the young lady went on—“But this is what has so interested and puzzled me,” and she commenced to read :—

"No. 503, Sunshine, by H. Thorne. This is a picture of extraordinary merit, and will bring the artist both fame and fortune, or we are very much mistaken. The subject is not by any means a new one, but the treatment of it is unique, and reveals not only the true artistic genius, but careful and honest work. The picture represents a wood in autumn all ablaze with the yellow light of the westering sun. Long avenues stretch away as far as eye can reach flecked with great bars of gold, and the trees with their fringe of light stand out from the canvas in a way that evince the highest art and the most careful treatment. In the foreground to the left is a rustic cottage, before which, on a rude bench sits an old man smoking, and gazing with rapt attention into the sunlighted wood before him. A little girl, with a happy, mischievous face, stands on the bench by the old man's side endeavouring to fasten a wreath of ferns round his hat, though her attention seems somewhat divided between the fern wreath and two lads who are walking arm-in-arm across the meadow towards the cottage. It is a picture that one would like to have in his home—a picture to be looked at again and again. We have returned to it several times, and each time we have discovered some new beauty in it. From the position and features of the little girl and the expression on the old man's face, we should

conclude that she was the sunshine of his life
But whether we have rightly interpreted the
artist's meaning in this we cannot say."

"Well, Ethel," said Mrs. Wynne, "what is
there to be puzzled at in that?"

"Why, ma, did you not notice that the picture
is by H. Thorne? I feel certain, somehow, that
it is Harry Thorne."

"Nonsense, my dear, 'Thorne' is by no means
an uncommon name."

"But it is not the name only, but the subject
of the picture," went on Ethel. "You know he
was quite an artist when he was at Cwmdare, and
I remember him one day in such a state of ex-
citement; he had seen the wood behind Adam
Rees' cottage steeped and saturated with golden
light, and he went on describing the various
effects to me. 'I shall make a picture of it some
day,' he said, and indeed he made one or two
good sketches, which he showed to me."

"Well, Ethel," said Mrs. Wynne, "suppose it
should be the same—and I admit from what you
have said it is probable, for he was always a nice,
clever lad—still, if he be the same, he has gone
up in the world, Ethel, and we have come down,
we cannot meet him again. Nor do I wish
memories of Cwmdare to be revived. If we could
forget that we had ever been anything else but
poor, it would be well for us."

"But we might go and see the picture, mamma."

"No, Ethel, we cannot afford it, and I take no pleasure in such things now."

"I think we might afford it for once," said Ethel.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Wynne, "I would not like to deny you any pleasure; and as you are the bread-winner you have a right to go if you would like, but I would very much prefer to stay at home."

"I wish you would go with me, mamma."

"No, Ethel, I could not go; even if it would give me pleasure, I could not stand the exertion."

Ethel did not say any more, but hastily putting on her bonnet, and kissing her mother affectionately, she went forth to her duties as music teacher in a private school.

She had borne her troubles bravely, had Ethel Wynne. She had never complained, never lost heart; and though sometimes the struggle for bread had been a hard one, especially since Douglas's disgrace—for Mrs. Wynne's brother turned his back upon them after that, and Ethel had to fight the world alone—yet she never lost her faith in God. Day by day she had toiled on with a cheerful face, and a heart that would be light, spite its burden of care. While she

had her mother with her she was content, and she was not the one to go half way to meet trouble.

Sometimes it is true her thoughts would wander away back over the years that had gone for ever, and she would wonder what had become of her poor brother and Harry Thorne—were they both outcasts? It would seem so, for she had seen the latter in poor attire singing in the streets—and she knew that Douglas had been in gaol. Alas, how had all their hopes withered! Then she would think of Enoch, and poor old Adam and Eve, and sometimes unutterable longings would rise up in her heart to visit the dear old place once more. But with a strong will she would put them aside, and take up her daily round of toil as though she had never known happier days.

During the day in question her thoughts often went wandering back to Cwmdare. The paragraph in the paper had stirred up a thousand memories that haunted her all the day, and even weaved themselves into her dreams during the following night. The face of her old playmate rose up before her continually, and many a little circumstance, that had lain quiet in the silent chambers of memory for more years than she cared to count, came forth again into the light and made her heart leap with a quicker throb.

On the third morning after seeing the notice of Harry's picture in the newspaper she directed her steps towards Piccadilly for the purpose of seeing with her own eyes the picture that had produced a far greater sensation than she was aware of. She was at the Royal Academy a few minutes after the doors were thrown open to the public, and having been once before with her uncle, the summer after their arrival in London, she was able to make her way, without loss of time, direct to the object of her search.

She had no eyes for any of the pictures that adorned the spacious rooms until she had seen No. 503. She was not long in finding it, and one glance at it was sufficient to assure her that the artist could be none other than her old friend and playmate, Harry Thorne.

It was a hot July morning, and tired with her long walk, Ethel seated herself before the picture to study it at her leisure. She had not been seated more than three minutes when Harry himself came in, and with a passing glance at his picture, and a rather prolonged stare at the lady who was evidently admiring it from the expression of her face, he passed forward to another room. Half an hour later he returned to find Ethel still seated before the picture, and giving her another prolonged stare, he walked to the

other end of the room under the pretence of looking more closely at some picture, but in reality to get a better view of the young lady.

"By Jove!" he muttered, "what a beautiful face! I wonder who she is! Not a lady of any social position, I should presume by her dress, and yet she dresses like a lady," and he smiled at his own paradox.

Still, under pretence of looking more closely at the pictures, he made his way toward Ethel, in the hope that he might get a closer view of her face without being noticed.

She did not notice him, she was too intent upon the picture, or too busy with her thoughts. After a while he walked away, muttering to himself, "It is like her, and unlike her. I've half a mind to speak." Making a rapid circuit of the rooms, he came back and stood by her side. Still she did not notice him. Then he walked close up to a picture hanging next to his own, examined it for a few moments, then turned suddenly round, and looked Ethel straight in the face. At the same moment Ethel looked up at him, started, blushed, and then turned pale.

"I beg your pardon," stammered Harry, feeling guilty of unpardonable rudeness, "and my apology must be that you so reminded me of a friend I knew many years ago, that I thought you must be the same."

“Indeed!” Ethel answered, blushing again; “that is strange, for you forcibly remind me of a friend I knew years ago. May I ask if you are the painter of this picture?”

“I have that honour,” said Harry, stroking his moustache and blushing; “my name is Harry Thorne.”

“And mine is Ethel Wynne.”

“Then I was not mistaken!” said Harry, a glad smile overspreading his face. “I have waited years for this.”

“Have you?” she said, smiling up at him, and placing her little hand in his out-stretched palm. Then they sat down side by side before his picture.

“Do you like it?” he said, after a pause, seeing she was gazing intently at it again.

“Very much,” she answered, “only somehow it makes me sad. It wakes up so many memories of those dear old days that are passed away for ever.”

“We must hope there are equally bright days in the future,” he answered.

“I am afraid that can hardly be,” she said, “at least, not for me.” Then she rose to go.

“Have you seen the other pictures?” he asked.

“I have not time to-day,” she answered, “I must be going now. I am so pleased to have

met you. Good morning!" and she held out her hand to him.

"Let me see you home," he said, "I want to see your mother. I have much to tell her."

"About Douglas?" she asked, looking up quickly.

He bowed his head.

"Then tell me now!" she said imploringly. "Oh, tell me where he is! We have not heard of him for years."

Drawing her hand through his arm, they walked away together, and as they made their way slowly towards Ethel's home, he broke gently to her the sad news of Douglas's fate. And later on, in the little back parlour, he told the poor sorrow-stricken mother how her only son was no more.

Mrs. Wynne bowed her white head in silent grief, she was not unprepared for the intelligence, and the news of his death was no more painful to her than would have been the tidings of some fresh disgrace.

Harry was a frequent visitor after that day. He had found his sunshine, and he was resolved to bask in its light as much as possible. Ethel was all, and more than all, that he had expected to find her; the promise of her girlhood was more than fulfilled. In her simple, closely-fitting dress she seemed far more lovely in his eyes than all the

ladies of rank and fashion that thronged the rooms of the Royal Academy during the first week of the exhibition.

About a month after their first meeting they found themselves together one evening in Hyde Park. The day had been very hot, but as evening came on the air became refreshingly cool. Seating themselves on one of the benches, they watched for a while in silence the crowds of people passing to and fro.

"Do you remember," said Harry after a long pause, "one day when Douglas and I were confiding to each other our plans for the future, and in our boyish enthusiasm spoke of the great things we intended to accomplish?"

"Yes," she answered sadly, "I remember very well. Poor Douglas!"

"And do you remember," said Harry, "Douglas asking you what you intended being, and you laughingly answered you had never thought about it?"

"Oh yes," she said, blushing slightly, "I remember it quite well; and you said you knew, and when we asked you to let us know you would not tell."

"Of course I did not know," said Harry, "I only hoped then what I have hoped ever since."

"Alas! we none of us knew the troubles that

awaited us," she said, for Harry had told her of his own struggles.

"Let us hope the worst are past," he said. "Perhaps God has brighter days in store for us all."

"If not here, hereafter," she answered softly, with a dreamy far-away look in her eyes.

"Here and hereafter also," he answered.

"For you," she said slowly, "for you have now a name and position."

"And my hope that day of which we have been speaking, and which I expressed in such positive terms," said Harry, "was, that when I had won a name and position you would be my wife. That hope," he said earnestly, "I have cherished ever since; it has brightened the darkest hours of my life, and lightened the heaviest burdens. Have I been wrong, Ethel, in cherishing such a hope?"

"No, not wrong, Harry, in the sense you mean; only I am poor now, and our family and name have been disgraced, and you are rich, or if not now you will be."

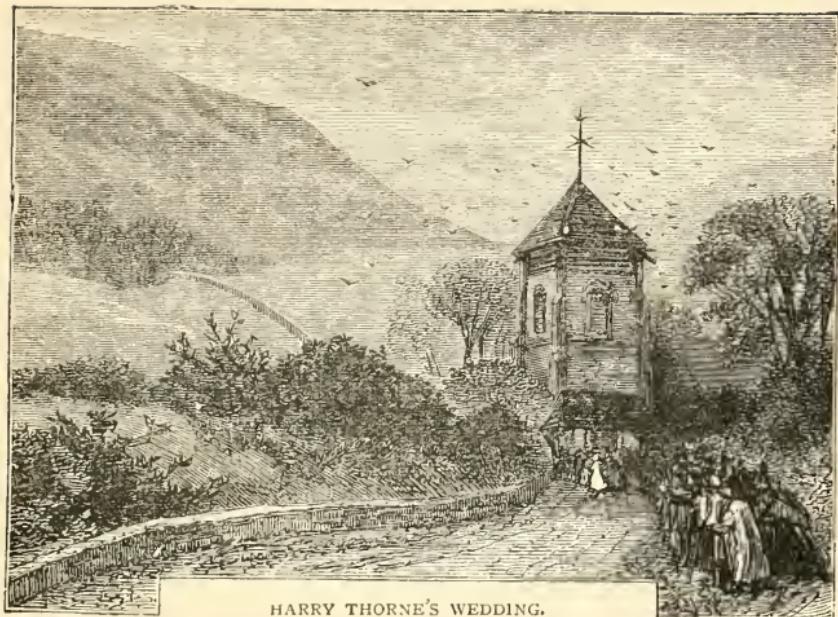
"If the name of Wynne has had a shadow cast upon it, so alas! has that of Thorne;" he said, "and when you were a rich man's daughter, and I but a poor outcast, you did not scorn me, but helped me in many ways. And now, if our positions are reversed, do I love you less on that

account? Nay, if possible I love you more. And now Ethel, do you object still?"

"No, Harry, you have always been first."

And so it was settled. It had grown dark by the time they began to retrace their steps homeward, but if Ethel minded it Harry did not. What was the darkness to him now, since he had found his sunshine?





HARRY THORNE'S WEDDING.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

"The west winds blow, and singing low
I hear the glad streams run;
The windows of my soul I throw
Wide open to the sun.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play:
And all the windows of my heart
I open to this day." —J. G. WHITTIER.



HIS chapter shall be a short one, for I have little to add to the foregoing pages. There were great doings in Cwmdare on the day of Harry's wedding. It was a glorious day. Not a cloud

flecked the deep blue of the sky. Ethel was welcomed back to her old home with shouts that seemed to rend the very sky, and made the hills echo with almost endless reverberations; the bells swirled and clashed as if they had gone mad with joy; and the juvenile portion of Cwmdare exercised their small lungs in a way that was positively alarming. Mr. Walters, Harry's old friend, had been invited over to tie the marriage knot, and right well he performed the ceremony, according to the united testimony of all the female portion of Cwmdare.

In the front garden Enoch had had a marquee erected in which to celebrate the wedding breakfast. It was a splendid affair, according to the testimony of all the guests. "The bride cake," Adam declared, "was like a young gasometer frosted." And the speeches were quite up to the mark. Mr. Walters, in proposing the health of the bride—in clear limpid water fresh from the spring—brought smiles and tears in abundance, Enoch blew his nose so often and so violently that it was quite red before the speeches were ended; and even on the pale cheeks of the invalid tears were seen.

Only very few of the guests knew who the invalid was, and they kept the secret well, for it was Owen Thorne's wish that his name should not be made known.

Harry looked handsomer than ever that day, as he stood up by the side of his fair young bride to speak. As for Ethel, I will not attempt to describe her. Every one that was at the wedding declared that she was positively lovely, and in that statement I fully concur.

Ethel had always been a favourite of Enoch's, and after breakfast he gave a practical illustration of his affection for her by presenting her with the "Deed" of the Grange. Of course there was great clapping and cheering when Enoch made that announcement. Ethel blushed and smiled, and then ran up to Enoch, and put her lovely arms around his neck and kissed him. This was the signal for a great deal more cheering, under cover of which Ethel escaped into the cottage.

In the afternoon, after the bride and bridegroom had departed on their wedding tour, a feast was made down in the meadow, for all and sundry who might care to come. Three sheep were roasted whole, and two quarters of beef kept them company during the process. Such a feast had never been known in Cwmdare, and the feeding was kept up until it was dark. Then huge bonfires were lighted, and cocoa and coffee dealt out to those whose throats were dry with shouting. It was long after midnight before the last shout died away, and the merrymaking came to an end.

Enoch and Adam seemed to have taken a new lease of their lives. But Owen Thorne and Mrs. Porter were both evidently passing away.

When Harry and Ethel returned to the Grange, which was to be his future home, Mrs. Wynne was there to welcome them. She looked ten years younger than when we saw her last in the little dark parlour in Islington. The dearest wish of her life was that she might spend the evening of her days at the Grange, and her wish was granted.

Harry was known from that day in the village as "the young Squire," and right manfully did he fill his position, growing year by year in the respect and affection of all who knew him.

His father did not long survive Harry's marriage. A few days after that event, he received a great shock through reading in the paper how one "Luke Dumford" had been hanged in Glasgow for murder. It was Owen Thorne's old companion. "It might have been me," he muttered, "it might have been me."

From that day he sank rapidly. But he did not seem to fear his approaching end. He said little, but that little revealed the deepest contrition for his past life, combined with the deepest humility.

He made only one request, and that was that he might be buried by the side of his once-loved

though much-abused wife. And then came out the secret of Enoch's visit to Bristol on that memorable occasion, when Ned broke out of the stable in which he had been tied up and came home riderless, and when the general impression was that the poor old man had been murdered.

On learning that his daughter was dead and the place where she died, he had gone to Primrose Square, and by the assistance of one of her neighbours, and the Registrar at the Cemetery, her grave was easily found. Enoch at once purchased the grave in which his daughter lay, and ordered a monument of granite to be erected on the spot, and he had been over since to see that the work had been properly done.

Mrs. Porter was the first to go. And among the glorious hills she loved so much they laid her down to sleep, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the just."

A few days after Owen Thorne quietly breathed his last, and it was whispered throughout the village that the sick stranger at the cottage was dead.

Enoch and Harry were the only mourners that followed him to his grave. His request was granted, by the side of his wife they laid him. Then, with bowed heads and in silence, they turned away and retraced their steps to Cwmdare.

The villagers much wondered what connection

there could be between “the young Squire” and this man who had died, and why he as well as his lady should go into mourning.

But the secret soon leaked out, for those who had been in possession of it felt that now there was no longer any necessity why it should be kept; and so, when the curious made inquiry of those who knew, they whispered—“The young Squire was his son.”

“What! Young Squire Thorne at the Grange?”

“Yes, it is quite true, the dead man was

“HIS FATHER.”

THE END.

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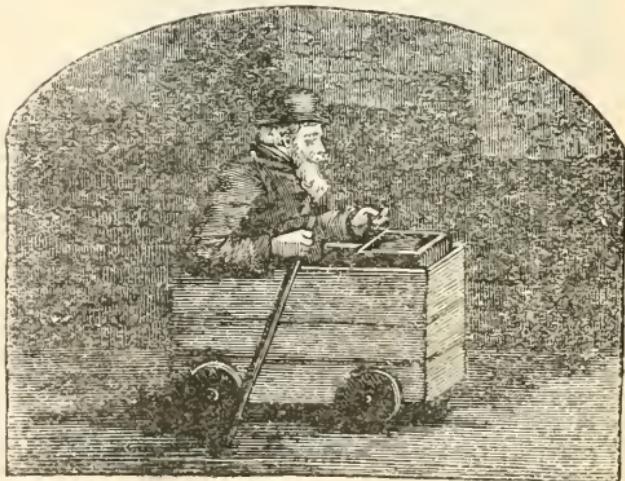
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